

**The Ramakrishna Mission
Institute of Culture Library**

Presented by

Dr. Baridbaran Mukerji

RMICL-8

14294

**THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE
LIBRARY**

gol Park

CALCUTTA - 29

OPENS. 2-8.20 P.M.

TEL. ~~433411~~

FINES : One anna per day after the last date below.

**RENEWALS : By post, telephone or in person. Quote the
number opposite and last date below.**

17 APR 1991
12 MAY 1991
29 JUL 1995

P.T.O.

THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY



By Same Author

**THE TRANSFORMATIONS
OF WAR**

7/6 net

THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY



TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
COLONEL J. COLIN

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

SPENSER WILKINSON

*Chichele Professor of Military History; Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford
President of the Manchester Tactical Society*

WITH TWENTY-EIGHT MAPS AND PLANS

LONDON

HUGH REES, LTD.

5 REGENT STREET, PALL MALL

1915

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED]

u

R.M.I.	
Acc	14,294
Class	954 262
Date:	
St. C.	PS
C	✓
C	✓
ES	✓
Ch	

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,
LONDON AND AYLESBURY;

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

IN 1898 a volume entitled *Études sur la Campagne de 1796-97 en Italie, par J. C. Capitaine d'Artillerie*, attracted the attention of military historians by its masterly exposition of Napoleon's generalship. It was followed in 1900 by *L'Éducation Militaire de Napoléon, par J. Colin, Capitaine d'Artillerie breveté à la Section historique de l'État-Major de l'armée*, which for the first time gave a true direction to men's inquiries into the origin and development of Napoleon's genius. The writer of these remarkable essays has since then illuminated the military history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a series of elaborate studies—of the Maréchal de Saxe, of the campaign in 1793 in Alsace and the Palatinate, and of the campaign of 1805—as well as by a number of essays illustrating the development of ancient and modern war.

The fruits of the author's prolonged studies have more recently been gathered into two short volumes contributed to Dr. Gustave Le Bon's *Bibliothèque de Philosophie scientifique*, published by Ernest Flammarion at Paris. The first, published in 1911, entitled *The Transformations of War*, was translated

vi PREFACE TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION

in 1912 by Major Pope-Hennessy. It gives an account of the evolution of tactics and strategy from the earliest times until our own day, and is a review of those changes in war which are due in great part to the improvement of weapons. In 1913 the author wrote a companion volume entitled *Les Grandes Batailles de l'Histoire*, which traces through twenty-five centuries of change the permanent fundamental conditions of success, and concludes with their application in the war, in 1913 as yet in the future, of which the world is now watching the course. The volume, though written and printed before the great war began, was not published until April 1915.

I think that these two volumes together form the best account of war, especially of modern war, that has in recent times been given to the world, at any rate in such brief compass, and that the new volume cannot but be useful to my countrymen. Soon after its publication, therefore, I asked for and obtained the collaboration of a group of friends in its translation. We divided the volume between us and have revised the whole of it in common.

The battles of Marathon, Arbela, Pharsalia, and Valmy were translated by Miss Rutherford, and those of Cannae, Zama, Bouvines, and Rocroi by Miss Constance Rutherford, daughters of my old friend the late Head Master of Westminster. Jena and Waterloo are the work of Miss F. M. Graves; Gravelotte of my daughter, Mrs. Francis Clarke; Mukden and Lule-Burgas of Mr. H. O. Becket, of

PREFACE TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION vii

Balliol College, Acting Director of the Oxford School of Geography, who has also kindly taken charge of the maps. I am responsible for the last chapter, in which I received invaluable suggestions and help from Mr. S. W. Rawson and Mr. L. F. R. Williams, Fellows of All Souls College, who have also kindly helped me with the revision of the other chapters. I am indebted for a number of happy suggestions to Miss Edith Fuller.

The maps have been drawn specially for the translation. There are fewer of them than in the original French edition, but enough to make it easy to follow the accounts given in the text. The aim has been to mark the place-names given in the text and hardly any others. When the positions of troops on both sides are shown, those of the victorious side are made the darker. A reference to the pages where the maps are to be found is given at the beginning of each chapter.

-- S. W.

ALL SOULS COLLEGE.

October 20, 1915.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It would be an ideal task to search through history for the deeper causes of victory by studying those battles which have brought about the great transformations in the system of States. Nothing could be more interesting than to discover the reason of success in each of the great struggles which have put one Empire in place of another; to trace in the features of the conflict the symptoms of the strength or decay of armies and of peoples; and so to show the tie which by means of success in war binds a nation's spiritual and economic condition to its political greatness.

This ideal task must be set aside as impracticable. The economic condition of States is not sufficiently known to form a basis for the inquiry, to say nothing of their spiritual condition, and of the strength of the feeling of nationality at a given date. To do justice only to the military portion of this vast subject a mere analysis of the battles, even of the great battles, is inadequate; to throw light upon it we should have to begin by examining each war in turn as a whole, for wars, while they constitute

a vital part of the history of States, assume an endless variety of forms.

Often, it is true, an Empire has apparently been overthrown in a single war, even in a single battle. Yet in reality its decline has been spread over centuries with alternations of success and failure, amid which it is hard to unravel the causes of ultimate defeat.

Great battles seldom mark the beginning or the end of a struggle between two powers of which one is waning and the other waxing. The greatest battles are fought towards the middle of the conflict and are not always decided in favour of the side which is to succeed in the end.

The Hundred Years War began with the English victory of Cressy. England triumphed again at Poitiers and at Agincourt, but France had the last word: two tiny battles, almost unknown, in Normandy and Guienne, Formigny and Castillon, were all that she needed to drive out the foreigner.

What were the victories by which the Arabs began their career of conquest? Who has ever heard of the battles of Cadesia and of the Yermuk? What were the last victories of the Turks in Europe, marking the end of the expansion of Islam? Only a learned historian can name them.

As our intention is to take a series of battles and to examine them thoroughly, we must give up the idea of picking out those that mark the coming or the fall of the Great Powers. These are sometimes of no importance, so that often enough their names

arouse no interest and excite no curiosity. Besides, we have to consider another factor, the evidence available, which has nothing to do either with the importance or the celebrity of a battle. At the beginning of the Middle Ages there were three great battles of capital importance to the history of Europe -- the defeat of Attila in Catalaunian Fields, that of the Arabs near Poitiers, and the conflict between the sons of Louis the Debonair near that Fontanetum which has not yet been identified with certainty. All that is really known of these three great battles would hardly fill a page.

Thus our selection will not be dictated by political considerations ; we shall simply choose for our study some of the most famous and best-known battles : in ancient times, Marathon, Arbela, Cannae, and Pharsalia ; in the Middle Ages, Bouvines ; in modern times, Rocroi, Valmy, Jena, Waterloo, and Gravelotte ; and in our own days Mukden and Lule-Burgas.

• We shall see what a great battle was in each epoch in turn. The popular version of each of them is so generally inaccurate that it is worth while telling the story over again for the sole purpose of restoring the truth. We shall then see the share that must be set down to the ability of the general and to the intrinsic worth of the troops.

We shall have to get rid of a widespread prejudice and to admit that the qualities that turn the scale in battle are those of professional soldiers, and that, if moral forces decide the issue, they do not act as

simply and directly as is commonly supposed. We shall be convinced that it is a mistake to expect a sudden outburst of passionate patriotism to carry off the victory in battle ; that success always belongs to the troops that are best instructed and best commanded, and that patriotism works, long before the day of conflict, by inducing a people to accept military service and to choose the most skilful generals.

The account of the battle of Marathon is based upon that of Herodotus, but regard has been had to the discussion raised by the writings of Delbrück¹ on the number of combatants.

On the battle of Arbela we possess no sources by the aid of which we could modify, interpret, or improve the text of Arrian.

For the other battles of antiquity, Cannae, Zama, and Pharsalia, it is impossible to imagine anything more perfect or complete than the important work of Professor Kromayer.²

For the battle of Bouvines we could not do better than follow the account of Professor Oman,³ which has the advantage that its new views of the facts are supported by numerous references to the documents.

¹ Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*. Berlin, 1900 et seq. *Die Perser und Burgunderkriege*. Berlin, 1887.

² J. Kromayer, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Griechenland*, 2 vol. in 8vo. Berlin, 1902-1907. J. Kromayer und G. Veith, *Antike Schlachtfelder, Italien und Afrika*, 2 vol. Berlin, 1912.

³ Ch. Oman, *A History of the Art of War. The Middle Ages*. London, 1898.

For the battle of Rocroi the Duc d'Aumale's history¹ has been followed; for that of Valmy, Chuquet's *Histoire des guerres de la Révolution*² and M. Dumolin's *Précis d'Histoire Militaire*.³

In the story of the battle of Jena the author has made use of the invaluable work of his lamented friend, Captain Bressonnet.⁴

The battle of Waterloo has been described after Houssaye⁵ and Lettow-Vorbeck,⁶ and special attention has been given to the quite recent work of Colonel James.⁷

For the battle of Gravelotte it has hardly been necessary to go beyond the work of General Bonnal,⁸ which gives the most lucid and careful study of this great conflict.

Lastly, the sketch of the battle of Lule-Burgas is based upon the narratives of Penennrun⁹ and Hochwachter.¹⁰

¹ *Histoire des Princes de Condé*, vol. 6, and *La Journée de Rocroi*. Paris, 1890.

² A. Chuquet, *Les Guerres de la Révolution*, vol. 2, *Valmy*. Paris, 1887.

³ Dumolin, *Précis d'Histoire Militaire : Révolution et Empire*. 1^{re} fascicule, 1792. Paris, 1901.

⁴ Capitaine Bressonnet, *Études Tactiques sur la Campagne de 1806 (Saalfeld, Iena, Auerstedt)*. Paris, 1909.

⁵ H. Houssaye. 1815. Paris, 1896.

⁶ Lettow Vorbeck, *Napoleon's Untergang 1815*, in the *Geschichte der Befreiungskriege*. Berlin, 1904.

⁷ Lieut.-Colonel James, *The Campaign of 1815, chiefly in Flanders*. London, 1908.

⁸ Général Bonnal, *La Manœuvre de Saint-Privat*, 3 vol. in 8vo. Paris, 1904-1912.

⁹ A. de Penennrun, *La Campagne de Thrace*. Paris, 1913.

¹⁰ Major Hochwachter, *Au feu avec les Turcs* (French translation). Paris, 1913.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
MARATHON (490 B.C.)	1
ARBELA (332 B.C.)	8
CANNÆ (216 B.C.)	13
ZAMA (203 B.C.)	21
PHARSALIA (48 B.C.)	29
BOUVINES (1214)	35
ROCROI (1643)	46
I. The Concentration	46
II. The Battle	53
VALMY (1792)	60
I. The Troops	60
II. The Campaign of 1792	66
III. The Battle	70
JENA (1806)	75
I. The French Army	75
II. The Prussian Army	81
III. The Operations	86
IV. Before the Battle	92
V. The Initial Situation	96
VI. Battle of Jena—First Phase	99
VII. Second Phase	100

JENA (1806)—*continued* :

VIII. Third Phase	102
IX. The General Attack	104
X. The Fourth Phase—Rüchel's Intervention	106
XI. The Battlefield of Auerstedt	108
XII. Engagement of Gudin and Friant	110
XIII. Morand's Arrival	114
XIV. The Prussian Retreat	118
XV. The Pursuit	119

WATERLOO (1815) 121

I. The Operations	121
II. The Troops	124
III. The Battlefield of Waterloo	127
IV. The Attack on Hougomont	132
V. Ney's Great Attack	133
VI. The Cavalry Attack	136
VII. The Engagement of the Prussians	140

GRAVELOTTE (1870) 144

I. The Weapons	144
II. The Prussian Army	148
III. Moltke	153
IV. The French Army	158
V. The Operations	161
VI. Round Metz	164
VII. The Preparations for Battle	168
VIII. The Fighting at Gravelotte	174
IX. The Fighting at Vernéville	181
X. The Attack on Saint-Privat	185

CONTENTS

xvii

	PAGE
MUKDEN (1905)	194
I. The Theatre of War	194
II. The Contending Armies	196
III. Earlier Operations	199
IV. The Great Battle	203
 LULE BURGAS (1912)	 217
I. The Opening	217
II. The Fight	223
 THE BATTLE OF THE FUTURE	 229
I. The Fight in Detail	230
II. Getting into Touch	236
III. Attack and Defence of a Position	241
IV. Battle of Two Armies on the March	251
V. Attacks in Flank and Rear	254
VI. Choice of the Mode of Attack	259
VII. A Battle of the Future	263
VIII. A Franco-German Battle	266
IX. The Causes of Victory	276
 NOTE ON THE FRENCH GUARD AT WATERLOO	 284

LIST OF MAPS

	PAGE
MARATHON	4
ARBELA	9
CANNÆ	20
PUNIC WARS	28
CAMPAIGNS OF MARATHON AND PHARSALIA . .	30
PHARSALIA	34
BOUVINES	37
ROCROI	58
JENA (BATTLEFIELD)	108
AUERSTEDT	118
JENA (CAMPAIGN)	120
VALMY AND CAMPAIGN OF WATERLOO . . .	126
WATERLOO (BATTLEFIELD)	142
GRAVELOTTE (CAMPAIGN)	155
GRAVELOTTE (OPERATIONS)	172
GRAVELOTTE (BATTLEFIELD)	192
MUKDEN	216
LULE BURGAS	228
THE FRANCO-GERMAN FRONTIER, 1914 . .	267

THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

MARATHON ¹

(490 B.C.)

THE Persians, with the half-savage tribes of Western Asia over whom they held sway—highlanders of Armenia and Media, of Persia and Hyrcania, horsemen of Sogdiana and Bactriana—had conquered the empires of Chaldea and of Lydia. They experienced little difficulty in reducing the Greek cities of Ionia, and they thought to find an equally easy prey in Greece herself.

But the spirit of the European Greek cities was very different from that of the Ionian. They were jealous of their independence and were always ready to make any sacrifice in order to preserve it. Every Greek citizen was firmly resolved to defend his country and had been trained to defend it well.

The Persian invasion, therefore, met with a real resistance, and a battle took place, insignificant indeed as regards the numbers engaged, but of inestimable importance in that it was the first war-like encounter of Asiatics with Europeans.

This was the battle of Marathon, and perhaps of no battle has the story become more legendary.

¹ See maps facing page 30 and on page 4.

2 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

The popular idea represents the great Persian empire flinging upon Greece huge imperial armies, well organised and well trained—armies, in short, of professional soldiers, against which Athens could bring only a scanty force of citizens, makeshift soldiers whose ardent patriotism and fierce love of liberty sufficed to give them the victory over the masses of blindly disciplined Persians.

No idea could be farther from the truth. The Asiatics were not in enormous numbers, indeed there would have been no room either in their fleet or on the battlefield for the hundreds of thousands of men spoken of by Herodotus.

Without going as far as Hans Delbrück and declaring that the Persian army was inferior in numbers to the Athenian, we may yet own that this is not impossible. Certainly there was no enormous disproportion, and if we put the number of Greeks at 10,000 men, we may count the Barbarians at not more than 15,000.

Nor must we lose sight of the fact that they really were barbarians; the Persian empire drew from its provinces hordes of half-wild mountaineers and nomads whose organisation was rudimentary and with whom it was impossible to manœuvre skilfully. The Athenians, on the other hand, though their military education was not so strict as that of the Spartans, were nevertheless well schooled and trained to war; military service was compulsory, and their young men, who were accustomed from childhood to gymnastic exercises, were drafted at the age of eighteen into fortress garrisons, and when their time of service was ended took the military oath and

were thenceforward liable to return to the army when required. Greek intelligence had directed the organisation of these levies, their equipment, and their tactics. The science of tactics, indeed, is Greek in origin as in name, and Miltiades was able to manœuvre with his phalanxes against the inert masses of the Persians.

There is, therefore, nothing amazing in the victory which saved West from East; what happened was natural and normal, and the Western nation conquered the Eastern barbarians simply by its more intelligent methods of warfare.

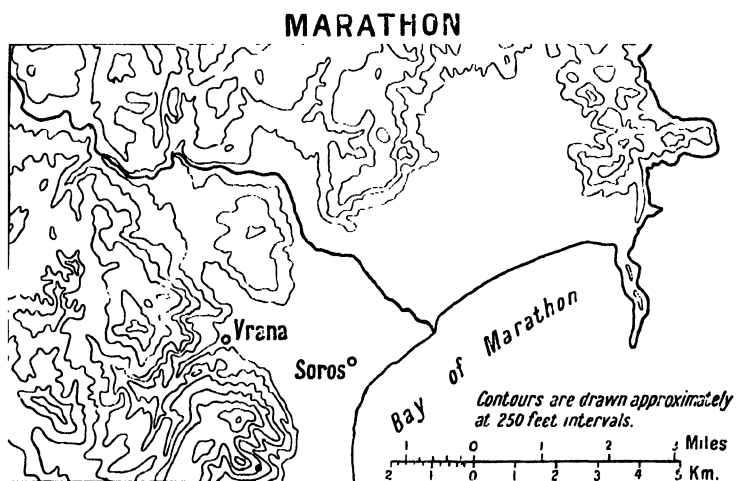
The fleet sent by Darius to conquer Greece was guided by the Pisistratid Hippias, to the wide shore of the bay of Marathon. We know nothing of the strength of the army that was disembarked, but it is evident that the enormous figures given by some of the ancient writers (varying as they do from 100,000 to as many as 300,000 men) are false. Probably there were at Marathon 10,000 to 15,000 infantrymen, almost all highlanders, Median and Persian archers wearing no armour; the Persians had also a small body of cavalry, but for some reason unknown to us it took no part in the battle.

The army of Athens and Plataea, 8,000 to 10,000 strong, was no doubt drawn up at the entrance of the valley of Vrana, where the Persians had to attack it before they could march on Athens whether by the valley or by the coast. The Persian troops were disposed opposite the Greeks at a distance of about 1,300 yards, and the two armies remained facing one another for several days. There were

4 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

ten Athenian generals, and each in turn commanded for one day, but Miltiades was the first who dared attack. He arranged his order of battle with great care. "His lines," according to Herodotus, "extended as far as did those of the Medes; the centre was only a few ranks deep and was the weakest part of the army, but there were formidable masses of men on the wings."

The Greek warriors of the fifth century wore helmets



and cuirasses, carried shields, and fought with iron or steel-tipped spears and with swords; the spear was only two yards or so long and was light and easy to handle. Between the files there was an interval of one pace and the same between the ranks, so that the hoplites who composed the phalanx had plenty of room to move. The phalanx was intended for close fighting, and when attacked from a distance by light-armed troops of archers or slingers was likely to suffer heavy loss while inflicting very little.

According to Herodotus the Greek hoplites at Marathon were not supported by light-armed troops suitable for fighting from a distance.

The Persian infantry, on the other hand, consisted almost entirely of compact bodies of archers, wearing no armour and equipped with swords or javelins for hand-to-hand fighting.

It is important to notice that the Greeks were as far ahead of the Persians in military knowledge as they were in equipment. We are tempted to imagine that because they were a republican militia, opposed to an imperial army, they were inferior in discipline and in solidity of organisation, but the contrary was really the case. With the exception of the guards, the Persian army consisted of levies of barbarous tribes from the mountains of Media and Armenia, half-savage hordes, mustered in haste, ill armed, and quite incapable of performing any military evolution correctly. Two centuries later the kings of Persia were still forced to employ Greek mercenaries when they had need of well-trained and well-equipped soldiers.

The Greeks of Miltiades had good armour; they were only militia, but trained individually to bodily exercises and also accustomed to evolutions. As an army they were better trained and armed than the Persians.

Being pikemen against archers, it was to the Greeks' interest to come to close quarters as quickly as possible, and Miltiades led them forward at a good pace. Herodotus says that they cleared at a run the distance of 1,300 yards between them and the enemy, but we may believe that they maintained the

6 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

quick march for the greater part of the way, and only broke into the double when within range of the Persian arrows.

“The Persians, when they saw their adversaries come running towards them, stood still awaiting their attack. They thought they must be mad and rushing on certain destruction to charge in such small numbers, especially as they had no cavalry or archers.”

The Athenians' lack of cavalry was only natural, as their country hardly produced any, but it is difficult to understand why the hoplites were not preceded and flanked by light-armed archers and slingers, for this was a custom which prevailed throughout the whole course of ancient warfare.

Nor is it easy to explain what had become of the Persian cavalry. It may, by some unlucky chance, have been away on a foraging or pillaging expedition on the day of the fight, or it may merely have been unable to take part in the close fighting because of the nature of its weapons. It certainly was not kept inactive by the nature of the ground, for if we suppose the Greeks' first position to have been in the valley of Vrana, the actual encounter must have taken place where the Persians were drawn up on the shore, close to the tumulus called Soros where the bodies of the dead Athenians were buried after the battle.

“The battle lasted long,” says Herodotus. “In the centre the Barbarians had the advantage. Here were placed the Persians and the Sacae, and here they were the victors; they broke the ranks of the Athenians and pursued them, advancing over the

country. But on the two wings the Athenians and Plataeans were victorious ; they routed the troops opposed to them and then joined forces and attacked those who had broken into the Athenians' centre. The Athenians' victory was complete ; they pursued the fugitives hotly, hacking them in pieces, and when they had forced them into the sea they shouted for fire with which to attack the ships. . . .

" Thanks to their dash, the Athenians took seven ships ; the Barbarians got away in those left to them by dint of hard rowing. . . .

" The Barbarians lost 6,400 men at the battle of Marathon, the Athenians 192."

This battle, where perhaps 25,000 men were engaged, did not end the struggle between East and West. The Asiatics renewed their attempts at conquest, and the Greeks had to face more violent assaults and to win the victories of Plataea and Salamis before they were altogether free of their aggressors.

From the military point of view, Marathon is an example of how a large, closely packed body of men, counting on brute force for victory, is likely to be quite helpless and finally to give way when attacked on both its flanks. We shall find this lesson repeated over and over again from Cannae to Waterloo and Sedan, and there will probably be even later examples of it, for the attack in mass has still supporters whom the experience of twenty-five centuries has failed to convince.

ARBELA ¹

(332 B.C.)

AFTER Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, the Persian empire declined rapidly, while the Greek spirit developed and Hellenic civilisation gave a great leap forward. To the north of Greece the ruder people of Macedonia, while benefiting by Greek civilisation, had kept intact the energy of the poor and savage tribes from which they sprang. Alexander, the tamer of Bucephalus, was also the pupil of Aristotle. The scientific tactical methods which the Greeks had elaborated were well known to the Macedonian warriors—highlanders of the Haemus, horsemen of Thrace and Paeonia—and the Macedonian kings, especially Philip, had bestowed much care on the training and organisation of an excellent army.

With such an instrument of war at his disposal, and all the riches of Greece in his control, it is not surprising that Alexander made short work of the untrained, undisciplined, unwieldy hordes which were all that the Persians could bring against him.

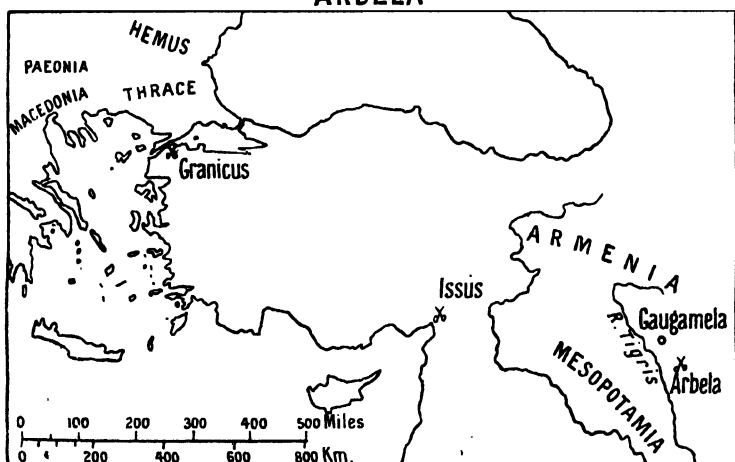
Greeks who had travelled in Persia, and especially those who had served as mercenaries in the Persian armies, taught Macedonia how weak the ancient empire really was: the superior civilisation which had kept the Eastern races from conquering Greece was now about to enable her to subdue the East.

¹ See map opposite.

Darius, who in the two preceding years had been beaten at the battles of the Granicus and of Issus, had re-formed his army in Mesopotamia. From the enormous figures given by some of the ancient writers we can gather only that it was superior in numbers to that of Alexander, which consisted of about 50,000 men.

Darius's army was concentrated near Gaugamela, about twenty-five miles east of the Tigris and thirty

ARBELA



from the little town of Arbela, not far from the mountains of Armenia.

The composition of this army is not known, but it certainly contained a large preponderance of cavalry ; its infantry consisted of levies hastily assembled from all parts of the empire, archers without defensive armour, but intended to fight in compact bodies and not as skirmishers. Apparently Darius had tried to form a small phalanx of warriors armed with spears, helmets, and swords, but the movements

10 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

required of this sort of body were such as could only be executed successfully by very well-trained soldiers and it took no conspicuous part in the battle.

He also tried to employ scythe-chariots, but these had almost fallen into disuse, and were not well enough handled to produce much effect. Their drivers seem neither to have worn protective armour nor to have been accompanied by archers to defend them as they drove, and they contented themselves with urging their horses into the *mêlée*, and then jumping down and leaving the chariots to their fate.

Alexander drew up his army facing the enemy's centre. It was composed of troops greatly differing in kind and value, and the young king did his best to allot to each an appropriate place and rôle.

The cavalry, though not in such a large proportion as in the Persian army, was nevertheless numerous, and included heavy cavalry with defensive armour, and light cavalry without, both armed with lances; there was also a small body of mounted archers.

The infantry was of three types, heavy, medium, and light.

The heavy infantry included the phalanx of Macedonian hoplites, which was no longer the phalanx of Marathon with its short spears, light armour, and comparatively open formation, but a body of heavily armoured hoplites, armed with pikes (*sarissae*) six yards or more long, and so closely packed together that they could hardly move at a walk. This phalanx was not supposed to charge, but to stand still and receive attacks, and was the solid nucleus round which the army could rally in case of need.

The medium infantry was composed of Macedonian hypaspists and Greek peltasts, who were less heavily armed than the hoplites and were able to move quickly and to attack. They carried spears and swords and also a few javelins.

The light infantry consisted of slingers, archers, and a body of Agrians famed for their skill in javelin throwing.

In his first line Alexander placed the hypaspists and the phalanx, with heavy cavalry on either wing.

His second line, which extended beyond the wings of the first, was composed of light troops with which he intended to manœuvre and to attack.

Darius put his chariots and his elephants in advance of his first line, and his numerous light cavalry on his wings.

If Alexander had delivered a frontal attack, he would have been enveloped immediately, but he ordered his army to make a half right turn, and to march in echelon against the enemy's left flank. It had nearly reached its object, when Darius, in a vain endeavour to find a movement which his troops were capable of executing, extended his left, composed of Scythians and Bactrians, and ordered it to charge. These light-armed horsemen easily enveloped the extremity of the Macedonian first line, but no sooner had they done so than they were themselves taken in flank by the light cavalry on the right of Alexander's second line. The struggle between these two bodies of very mobile troops remained for some time undecided.

Meanwhile Darius attempted to break through the

12 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

Macedonian centre by flinging his scythe-chariots against it ; but whether because their drivers abandoned them, or because most of them were driven out of their course by the arrows of the Thracian and Paeonian sharpshooters who swarmed over the plain, these chariots were dragged off towards the flanks by their horses, and did no damage.

The two armies now joined battle, and as the alternate bodies of cavalry and infantry, of which the Persian first line was composed, pushed forward at different speeds, gaps appeared, into which Alexander thrust his nearest troops, namely the Macedonian heavy infantry, supported by echelons of peltasts and hypaspists.

Although the Persian front was thus broken through, the battle was still far from decided ; but Darius chose this moment to leave the field, and his army followed him. So ended the Persian empire.

Hardly a century after the Greek conquest of the East, Rome, already mistress of Italy, tried to wrest from the Carthaginians their Mediterranean empire.

CANNÆ ¹

(216 B.C.)

ITALY, united under Roman sovereignty, had need of Sicilian corn. She must also maintain her profitable trade with Greater Greece. For these reasons Rome could not tolerate the occupation of Sicily by the Carthaginians and she drove them out. This was the object of the First Punic War. In order to win, Rome improvised a fleet and contrived to make it superior to that of Carthage, the chief maritime power of the world. Thenceforward Carthage's strength was gone; she, who lived only by the sea, was now no longer mistress of it, and was at the mercy of the Romans. It was no longer a question of the possession of Sicily or Sardinia; her very honour and liberty were at stake. Those among the Carthaginians whose hearts were filled with the love of their country could not endure the perpetual humiliation. They sought every means of renewing the struggle and vanquishing Rome.

Bred in the camps of Sicily and Spain, and practised in war and the command of armies from earliest youth, Hannibal had become, at the age of twenty-nine, general-in-chief of the Carthaginian armies in Spain. He at once conceived the idea of attacking the power of Rome at its very heart, and, since the Romans were now masters of the seas and islands,

¹ See maps facing pages 28 and 20.

14 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

he determined to march on Rome by land. He began without delay to make ready methodically for this immense undertaking, which the Carthaginian government accepted rather than commanded.

Hannibal had given two years to increasing the Punic dominion in Spain, in order to procure a belt of country large enough for his march and the necessary supplies of men. At the same time he opened negotiations with the Cis-alpine Gauls, then at war with the Romans, and secured their alliance.

In 218 he left Ampurias, a small sea-port at the foot of the Pyrenees, crossed the mountains not far from the sea, and marched along the coast of the Mediterranean. He made the passage of the Rhône near Arles, immediately above the delta, his army consisting of 60,000 men and 37 elephants.

Publius Scipio had just disembarked east of the Rhône mouths, with an army of 40,000 men, and was marching against the Carthaginians; but in spite of his superior numbers Hannibal did not wait for the Romans, and continued his march northwards.

The Carthaginian army halted for some days in the rich plain of Vaucluse, where it revictualled and procured guides. It then proceeded up the valleys of the Rhône and the Isère. At the moment of entering the mountains, it was attacked by the Allobroges in the defile between the steep slopes of the Vercors and the left bank of the Isère. Escaping, not without loss, from this first ambush, the Carthaginians reorganised their supplies at Grenoble (Cularo) and continued their march up the Isère valley, then up that of the Arc. At the defile of the Pas du Roc, now commanded by the Fort du

Télégraphe, they were once more surprised by the tribes who had gathered from the surrounding mountains, and it was only with difficulty that Hannibal extricated himself from this second affair. Fortunately he was already near the pass by which he intended to cross the principal crest of the Alps, namely the Clapier, near the Mont-Cenis. Forced to halt for two days near the summit to wait for stragglers, the army was somewhat demoralised by the first snows and the icy winds which blew across the pass, but Hannibal restored its courage by pointing to the sun-bathed plains of Italy, and two days later the army was encamped near the chief town of the Taurini. It was reduced to half its original strength.

While the Carthaginians were crossing the Alps, Cornelius Scipio had taken up a position confronting the enemy on the banks of the Po, near Piacenza. Here Hannibal gained a decisive victory near the Trebbia, allowing a very small portion of the Consular army, which he had enveloped, to escape. (December, 218.)

Reinforced, apparently, by 60,000 Gauls, Hannibal crossed the Apennines in the spring of 217, and passed the marshes of the Arno below Florence. He thus avoided being intercepted by the Consul Flaminus, who was waiting for him in Umbria.

The two armies met near Lake Trasimene. Flaminus led his column along the road which followed the shore, while the Carthaginians were in occupation of the heights above. In consequence the whole Roman army was once more annihilated.

Quintus Fabius Maximus, hastily nominated Dictator, now assembled every man that Rome and her

16 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

allies could put in the field, but, conscious of Hannibal's superiority, and also realising that his adversary's position in a hostile country was not without its drawbacks, he adopted the plan of perpetually following him and harassing him, while avoiding decisive engagements and rendering it as difficult as possible for him to obtain supplies.

After his hard campaign in Tuscany, Hannibal led his army into the plains bordering on the Adriatic to rest and re-form. When this had been done he still did not march on Rome, but went towards Apulia, whence he passed into Samnium, then into Campania. Fabius followed his every movement, always selecting positions where he was safe from all attack and had an easy source of supplies, and whence he could threaten and attack the enemy's foraging parties and small detachments.

Finding his movements thus harassed and impeded, Hannibal decided to return into Apulia. He crossed the Abruzzi mountains and established himself at Gerunium on the Adriatic slopes.

Here again Fabius followed him, and took up a position opposite him, threatening him perpetually, harrying him, and cutting off his detachments. Suddenly Hannibal conceived the plan of a *coup-de-main*, which would ensure the subsistence of his army at the expense of the Romans for some time at any rate. Having learnt that there was a supply depot weakly guarded in the small fort of Cannae, he threw himself on the place and seized it, establishing his camp close to it on the right bank of the Aufidus five or six miles from the Adriatic. To his left up the river were the mountains, with Cannae crowning one

of the last spurs. To the right the ground sloped away gently to a plain of some width. On the farther bank of the Aufidus the plain was wider and spread out opposite Cannæ and the Carthaginian camp. The Consuls Aemilius Paullus and Varro, who had now succeeded Fabius in command of the Roman army, followed the march of the Carthaginians. To secure their supplies, which came by sea, they encamped on the left bank of the Aufidus, a league from the sea. Anxious for battle, Hannibal crossed to this bank and camped opposite the Romans, hardly two miles from their camp. He left a sufficient garrison in Cannæ, but the Romans threw a detachment across the river to threaten the town. In accordance with the Roman custom, each of the two Consuls took command of the army in turn. Until now, Varro had let himself be persuaded by Aemilius Paullus to follow Fabius' tactics and to harass the enemy without accepting battle. Hannibal was not in sufficient force to besiege Rome, and, having no regular magazines and being unable to rely on organised requisition, he could not go on endlessly pillaging Italy. But Varro could not resist the desire to fight. When his turn in command came round, he brought his troops out of both camps and ranged them on the right bank of the Aufidus to the south of the small Roman camp.

Delighted at seeing his opponents offer battle, Hannibal hastened to range his army opposite the Romans, his left a little in advance of Cannæ.

The Romans had about 70,000 men, of whom 6,000 were cavalry, besides garrisons left in the camps and 10,000 sent to attack the Carthaginian

18 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

camp. Hannibal had 40,000 foot-soldiers and 10,000 horsemen.

Varro, a mediocre general with little military knowledge, oppressed by his adversary's reputation, feared some terrible manœuvre such as those of the Trebbia and Trasimene, and thought to avert the danger and make himself strong in every direction by massing his troops closely together. He greatly increased the depth of his infantry formation, carrying it probably to twenty ranks in each line, and thus his 60,000 foot-soldiers only occupied a front of 2,000 yards. His 6,000 horsemen formed the wings of the army, the Romans on the right, not far from the Aufidus, the allies on the left.

This order of battle had already been taken, when Hannibal debouched into the plain and drew up his army. He had issued orders that the Numidian cavalry should be placed on the right, the Spanish and Gallic on the left, while in the infantry line the Africans were to be on the right and left, the Gauls and Spaniards in the centre.

When he had observed the Roman army, which he could see from the walls of the town, Hannibal made a special disposition of his centre. He ordered it to deploy in the form of a crescent, probably echeloning the units outwards towards the rear from the central point. The Gallo-Spanish line was thus thinned, and its 30,000 men had a front almost equal to that of the 60,000 Roman legionaries.

The 7,000 African veterans, ranged on the two wings, extended beyond the Roman infantry by about 275 yards on either side, before the battle began.

When the Romans opened the attack, and bent their

line round the Gallic centre, their wings drew still closer together, and invited envelopment. Moreover, the Gauls, by reason of their advanced position, received the full weight of the first attacks, and, seeming to give way, drew the Romans on in the belief that they could press home their attack at this point, and make success certain. Thus the legionaries were soon gathered together in a dense mass in the middle of the battlefield.

The Gauls, ranged in very shallow formation, ended by breaking, and the Romans hurled themselves into the breach. Then the two troops of African veterans came into play.¹ Having no opposing force in front of them, they closed in on the flanks of the Roman mass, which made some attempt to change its order to meet them, but this was not done by an evolution of the whole body ordered by the Consuls, only by the individual movements of a few maniples.

At the very beginning of the battle the cavalry of both armies had charged. Hannibal's, more numerous and of better quality, had speedily got the upper hand. The Gallo-Spanish horsemen had thrown the Romans back into the river. The Numidians did not gain so easy a success against the Italian cavalry, well armed with helmets and cuirasses; but presently the Spaniards and Gauls returned and took them in the rear, and the disaster was complete.

As soon as the Italian cavalry was broken, the Spanish and Gallic horsemen, leaving the pursuit to

¹ Polybius exactly defines the evolution performed: "Those on the right made a left turn and then deployed to the right; those on the left made the corresponding movement."

20 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

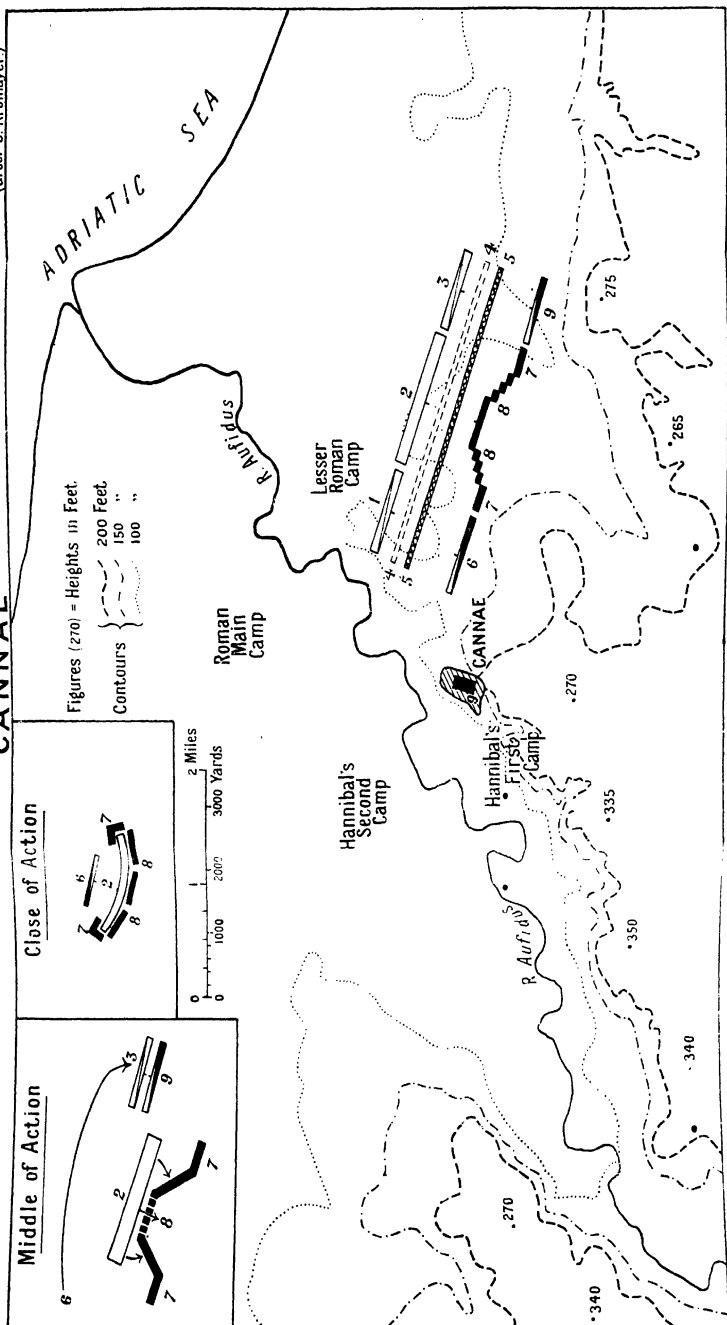
the Numidians, closed in on the rear of the Roman infantry. Now that these had to support attack from all sides at once, their first adversaries, the Spanish and Gallic foot-soldiers, returned to the charge, re-forming their line.

Then all that the Romans could do, completely surrounded as they were, was to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Some thousands of them had, no doubt, managed to escape when the Gallic centre was broken. Some of the Italian horsemen were also able to get away safely from the pursuit of the Numidians, and among these was the Consul Varro, author of the disaster, who yet did not dare to die. Aemilius Paullus, on the contrary, sought and found death at the head of his legions.

In all about 50,000 Romans were killed, 19,000 captured, while about 15,000 escaped, among whom were those who had attacked Hannibal's camp.

Victories as complete as those of Hannibal are rare in history. On the banks of the Trebbia and Lake Trasimene, and finally at Cannae, the Roman armies were utterly annihilated. And yet Rome did not give in. History has no finer lesson to offer; nowhere are we shown more clearly that we should never despair for our country. People are still found who declare that in future wars the first battle will decide everything, but, in the future as in the past, one lost battle will never give the right to despair.

(after J. Kromayer.)



KEY TO TROOPS.—Consular army (in outline)
army (shaded) : 5, Light troops : 6
Spanish infantry : 9, Nuncio : 9

- 1, Roman cavalry; 2, Legions; 3, Allied cavalry; Light troops (skirmishers, archers, slingers, etc.); 6, Spanish and Gallic cavalry; 7, African regular infantry; 8, Gallic and Carthaginian garrison in Cannae has also been numbered 9, in error); 9, Hannibal's

Expositione p. 11.

ZAMA ¹

(203 B.C.)

It would seem that a battle like that of Cannae might well have decided the issue of the war, but, as a matter of fact, it had little effect upon it, and thus we see how little the genius of one man avails against the profound causes which determine the fate of empires.

We are obliged to admit that central Italy was already much more Roman in feeling than we usually imagine, or than Hannibal himself expected. In spite of his three great victories, following one upon another, he did not succeed in detaching a single Italian tribe from Rome. The Roman republic, making use of any material that came to hand, contrived to raise fresh armies numerically superior to those of Hannibal. He, on the other hand, had only 35,000 to 40,000 men remaining, and could find none wherewith to reinforce them. The Roman fleets, which held the sea, prevented any direct communication with Carthage, and behind him, in Picenum, Sabinum, Latium, Umbria, and Etruria, the Carthaginian couriers were intercepted. Hannibal seldom succeeded in communicating either with Cis-alpine Gaul or Spain. Blockaded thus, he was doomed to final destruction by attrition at a date which might be near or far, but must eventually arrive.

¹ See map facing page 28.

22 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

The Romans acted accordingly and resumed the tactics of Fabius and Aemilius Paullus, modifying them somewhat. They refused battle, but small armies were posted round about Hannibal, moving with him, intercepting his convoys, cutting off his detachments, and preventing him besieging towns where he might establish depots.

In 216, after Cannae, expeditions undertaken by Hannibal against Naples and Nola resulted in failure.

Rome, only avoiding battle with Hannibal personally, multiplied her armies and took the offensive in all theatres of operations other than Campania. Her fleets scoured the seas; her troops conquered Sardinia, roused Sicily into revolt, invaded Cisalpine Gaul and Spain. In 210 Sicily was forced to become a Roman province by Marcellus; the Scipios, after alternate successes and reverses, conquered Spain in 206. In Africa the Romans in 213 obtained the alliance of Syphax, King of Numidia. Thus by degrees Hannibal's army found itself cut off in a world wholly Roman.

All his attempts against the towns of Campania met with failure, and strong detachments commanded by Hanno were beaten in 215 and 214. In vain did Hannibal quit Campania for Picenum, and afterwards Picenum for Tarentum. The Romans pursued him ceaselessly, cutting off on one occasion 1,000 Numidian horsemen, and retaking towns as he conquered them. In 212, however, he succeeded in driving the Romans out of Capua and took Tarentum. Then, after two successes of some importance near Herdonia in Apulia, he decided to

march on Rome (211), but failed in this object and had to retire for safety as far as Calabria. There he carried on a defensive war by means of violent counter-strokes, which several times carried him into Campania. Finally in 207 he was beaten in Lucania, while his brother Hasdrubal, who was bringing him the last troops that survived the disasters of Spain, was completely defeated on the shores of the Metaurus in Umbria.

Hannibal then plunged still deeper into Calabria, where he held out for four more years (207-203) though he was not again able to move out from that province.

Leaving their enemy, now rendered powerless, to wear himself out here, the Romans, in 205, carried the war into Africa. Scipio ravaged the country and beat the Carthaginians in two engagements, before Utica, and in the plains of the Medjerda (203). He dethroned the Numidian Syphax, who had proved unfaithful to the Roman alliance, and set up Massinissa, destined to prove a valuable ally in the decisive action.

Hannibal, recalled to Africa, contrived to evade the Roman fleets and cross the sea in safety. He disembarked at Carthage with 24,000 veterans. His government also put under his command about 12,000 Carthaginian levies, and 12,000 African mercenaries. Contrary to what had been the case fifteen years before, he had little cavalry. At most he had only 2,000 Numidian horsemen.

The greater part of the Numidians were now with the Roman army commanded by Scipio. This army seems to have comprised from 25,000 to 30,000 foot and about 6,000 horse.

24 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

While Scipio was effecting a junction with Masinissa near Narragarra,¹ Hannibal had halted at Zama,² then advanced to meet his enemy. The encounter took place, therefore, not at Zama, but in the neighbourhood of Narragarra, almost certainly in the valley of the river Mellega, nearly half-way between Tebessa and Souk-el-Arba. The position of the battlefield cannot be established more exactly, but it is certain that it was not near Zama, and the title, Battle of Zama, consecrated by use, is incorrect.

Also, it matters little at what exact spot the encounter took place, as it was on an absolutely flat plain and no topographical feature played any part in the course of events.

This battle deserves the attention of historians more than any other, for it was as important politically as it is interesting from the point of view of military theory, and there is perhaps no other in which the two generals engaged exhibited greater ability, made more profound calculations, or showed such readiness in meeting and countering unforeseen contingencies, both during the course of the action and in the preliminary dispositions.

Scipio ranged his legions in three lines, following the usual plan—*hastati*, *principes*, *triarii*—but, instead of placing the maniples of the three lines in quincunx, those of the second line behind the intervals of the first line, and those of the third line behind the gaps in the second line, he placed the maniples of all three lines one behind the other, so as to leave con-

¹ Narragarra is between the Medjerda and the Wad-Mellega in Tunisia, near the Algerian frontier.

² Not far from El-Kesour.

tinuous avenues between them through which Hannibal's elephants would naturally pass rather than crush the maniples underfoot. The cavalry was placed on the two wings, Italians on the left, Numidians on the right.

Hannibal also formed up his infantry in three lines, the mercenaries, the Carthaginian levies, and the old Italian troops: but there was this great novelty in his order of battle, the third line was at 220 yards' distance from the second. Hannibal put little faith in the untried mercenaries and levies which composed his first two lines. He only counted on them to engage the Romans in the first place and cause them to break their order. His veterans, equal in number to Scipio's soldiers, would then find all ready for them to manœuvre on the wings and once more envelop the Roman army. But for this it was necessary that the veterans should be reserved in good order, protected from the confusion of the battle; while to keep the levies themselves in good order and to wear out the Romans with progressive fighting, it was essential that Hannibal's second line should not hasten to rejoin the first. They were supposed to fight successively.

What Hannibal had most to fear was Scipio's cavalry, three times more numerous than his own. It seems probable that he ordered his horsemen to flee before the enemy and to draw him away from the field so far that he could not return before the action was decided.

Scipio, on his side, had first to dispose of Hannibal's cavalry, in order to allow of his Numidians charging the Carthaginian army in the rear.

26 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

The battle was begun, therefore, by the cavalry of both sides, who in a few minutes were galloping away over the plain. At the same time Hannibal's twenty-six elephants made their advance, but their drivers did not succeed in throwing them on the Roman maniples. Instinctively the animals avoided the little groups of men and sought a passage through the gaps between them, where they were riddled with darts by the *velites* hidden behind the maniples. Some of the elephants are said to have escaped by the wings of the Roman army, but at all events the episode was over in a few minutes, leaving the legions undisturbed, while the elephants appeared no more in the field.

The struggle then began between the infantry of the two armies. The hastati and Hannibal's mercenaries charged each other, but these last, seeing that the Carthaginian levies were not supporting them, thought, with some reason, that they were being sacrificed in advance, raised cries of treason, and, turning back, threw themselves on the levies. Battle was being waged, therefore, between Hannibal's two first infantry lines instead of between the Romans and Carthaginians. The hastati had only to fall upon the frenzied mob, and were hardly able to keep pace with the mercenaries who fled before them. The order of the maniples remained almost unbroken.

Meanwhile, after the cavalry had uncovered the wings, Scipio was able to see, what he could not before, the great distance between Hannibal's second and third lines, and he divined the trap laid by his enemy.

With unexampled boldness he sounded the recall ! He counted on the extraordinary steadiness of his troops in thus demanding of them to break off the action, and turn their backs on the enemy without hesitating or getting into disorder. In doing this, the legionaries gave a marvellous proof of discipline, of moral force, and of confidence in their leader. The *hastati* returned to take up position in front of the *principes*, and the legions re-formed, while the mercenaries and Carthaginian levies continued to massacre each other.

The legions were no sooner reassembled than Scipio modified his order of battle. He formed up the *hastati* in the centre (in two lines of maniples in quincunx ?) and placed his best troops, the *principes* and *triarii*, on the wings. His front was more extended and his main strength lay in the wings. It was now he who threatened the Carthaginians with a repetition of the manœuvre of Cannae.

Hannibal had counted on the Romans beating the first Carthaginian line and overlapping it, and he thought to envelop them in their turn with his third line, kept till then out of the battle. When he saw his first two lines broken, in disorder, and out of action, while the Romans were recalled and re-formed, he abandoned this project, but he had left 24,000 men of his best troops with which he could still hope to beat Scipio's 24,000 Romans.

After the pause produced by the struggle between the two first Carthaginian lines and their elimination from the battle, the two armies again advanced towards each other. Both were composed of disciplined troops of equal numbers, commanded by

28 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

great generals, and they occupied almost equal fronts. Neither erred by excessive attenuation of line or too exaggerated a depth. Neither general dared, apparently, risk any bold manœuvre against an adversary whose worth he knew. The battle was, no doubt, a simple frontal action.

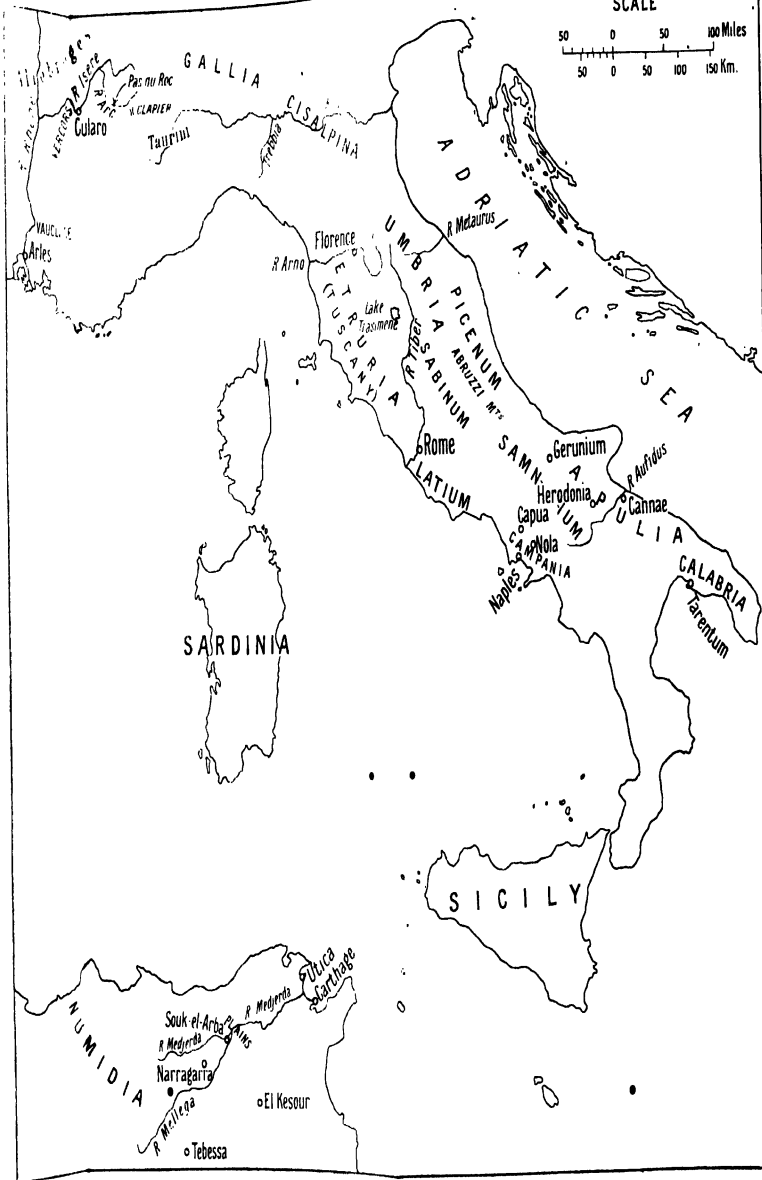
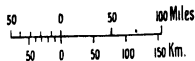
As far as can be judged, the fight remained for a long time undecided, Hannibal's veterans gaining a hardly appreciable advantage over the legionaries, thoroughly disciplined, but less experienced in war.

But the time which had elapsed between the two phases of the battle was fatal to the Carthaginians. The Roman and Numidian cavalry had time to return, after dispersing their opponents, and take Hannibal's infantry in rear. This charge of 6,000 horsemen was decisive. It ended the battle, the war, the career of Hannibal, and the empire of Carthage.

Rome, mistress of the Mediterranean, easily conquered the decadent empires of the Macedonian Diadochi, but the spirit of ancient Rome was no longer able to animate this vast empire. The new spirit, that of the Roman world, was victorious with Caesar on the day of Pharsalia.

PUNIC WARS

SCALE



PHARSALIA ¹

(48 B.C.)

THE men who fought at Marathon, Arbela, Cannae, and Zama fought for their country, and were ready to face death gladly in the cause of patriotism. At Pharsalia the situation was quite different. Caesar and Pompey, though ostensibly the one was upholding the cause of the subject peoples clamouring for adoption, and the other supporting the old idea of a patrician and purely Roman Republic, were really struggling for the mastery of the Roman world. Their soldiers cared little for the odds at stake, but much for their generals. Some legions happened to be attached to Caesar, and some to Pompey, and this was quite enough to make them fight bravely. The soldiers of Pharsalia were inspired by devotion not to a cause, but to a man.

A series of events which need not be dwelt on here had led Caesar and Pompey to choose Epirus and Thessaly as the scene of their final struggle. Caesar had been beaten at Dyrrachium, on the shores of the Adriatic, and had retired eastwards in order to call in his detachments from Macedonia and Greece. The junction of his forces took place on the little plain, forty-five miles or so long by twenty broad, which lies south-west of Parissa, between Mount Olympus and Mount Othrys. It is watered by several

¹ See maps facing pages 30 and 34.

30 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

streams, tributaries of the Europus, one of which, the Enipeus, played a part in the battle. A league from the Enipeus, in the south-east corner of the plain, with its back to the mountains, lies the little town of Pharsalus.

Caesar pitched his camp, some little way to the west of Pharsalus, on the plain. He had 22,000 legionaries and 1,000 horsemen.

Meanwhile Pompey approached from Larissa, where he, too, had joined forces with troops which had been operating in Thessaly. He camped near Pharsalus on high ground, with 45,000 legionaries and 7,000 cavalry.

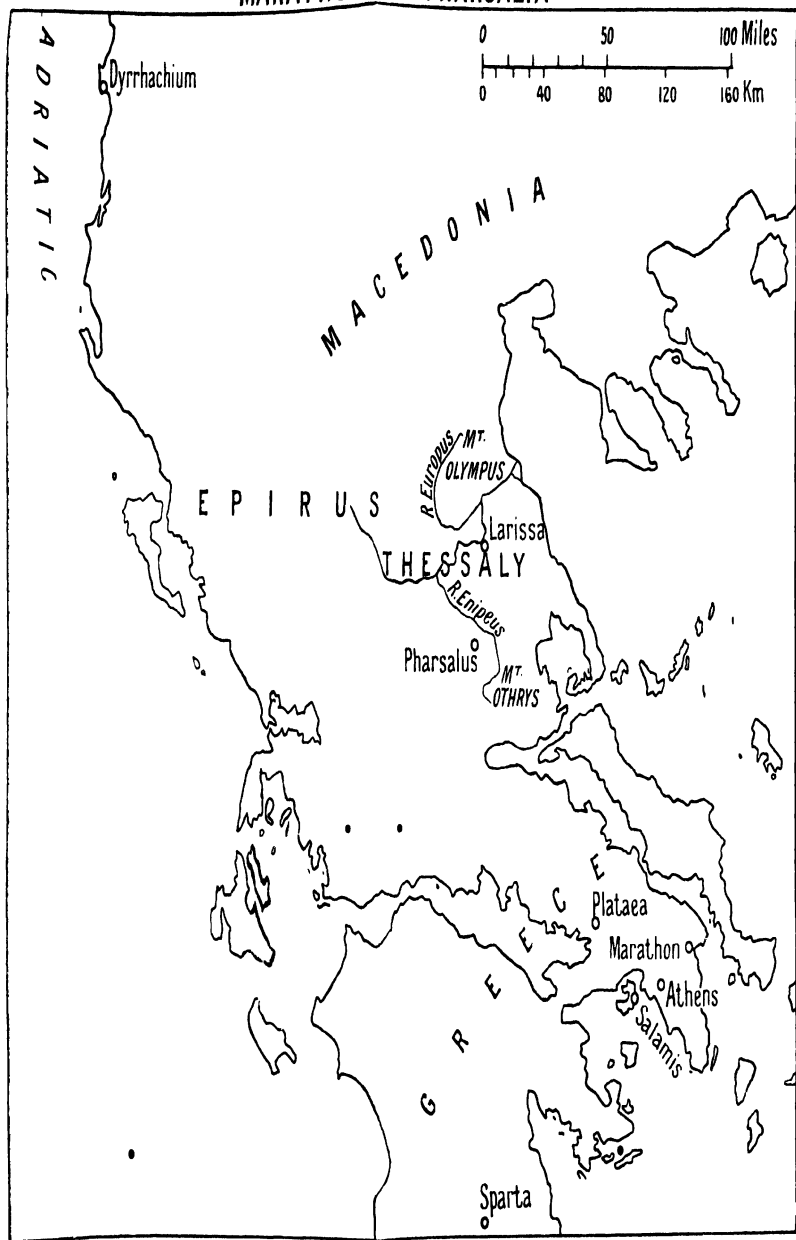
14294.

The Roman infantry no longer quite resembled that which had fought at Cannae and at Zama. A new unit had been formed, half-way in size between the maniple and the legion ; it was called the cohort, corresponded fairly exactly with the modern battalion, and had been proved by use to be the true tactical unit, so that armies were now counted by cohorts. In the present instance Caesar had 80 cohorts and Pompey 110.

Another tendency, already apparent at Zama, had been confirmed, and indeed had revolutionised the art of war : this was the use of reserves, which the Roman generals were now accustomed to form and to employ. They were composed of a limited number of cohorts and were consequently mobile and easy to handle, and they had begun to play an important part in deciding the fate of battles.

In all probability Pompey's camp was nearly 3,000 yards to the north-east of Pharsalus, on the saddle which joins the Krindir to the main chain.

MARATHON & PHARSALIA



The camp was connected with the river by an entrenchment, which served as a protection for the fatigue-parties going to fetch water.

Caesar's camp was on the plain, about three miles to the west of Pompey's. For several days running he marched his army out on to the plain, and drew it up in battle array, to tempt Pompey to fight, but in vain.

Meanwhile he was carefully training his cavalry, strengthening it by placing in its ranks his best "antesignani" (picked soldiers belonging to no special unit), and engaging it in little skirmishes with Pompey's more numerous horsemen so as to give it confidence. He tells us that it eventually became so bold that it would not have feared, with its 1,000 riders, to charge Pompey's 7,000.

At last Pompey accepted battle, and drew up his army facing Caesar's.

In the battle of Zama we witnessed a struggle between two great generals. At Pharsalia a man of genius is confronted by a very ordinary soldier, who is, moreover, aware of his inferiority. And we may, too, be fairly certain (despite the prejudiced testimony of Labienus) that Caesar's soldiers had been seasoned by hard fighting against the Gauls, while those of Pompey had met only foes of little account in their eastern campaigns.

Pompey did not attempt any stroke of genius in the arrangement of his troops. Trusting to his enormous numerical superiority, he drew up his legions in the regulation formation in three lines, resting his right on the Enipeus, which, as it flowed between steep banks, twenty feet high, formed an

32 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

obstacle quite insurmountable in a battle of that period. On his left he put his 7,000 horsemen, strengthened by *velites*. His idea was that this mass of cavalry should throw that of Caesar into confusion, and then overlap the enemy's right, and perhaps even take his legions in reverse.

Pompey had taken up a position which so obviously limited him to only one possible plan of action that Caesar was able to take measures to parry the exact form of attack which his enemy had devised.

He left only two of his eighty cohorts to guard his camp, and divided the rest of his infantry into four parts instead of the usual three. The third of these detachments he placed at some distance from the two first, so that actually it formed a reserve, and the fourth, which consisted of six picked cohorts, he put facing half-right behind his right wing. His thousand horse were on his extreme right, opposite Pompey's cavalry.

The battle followed a very simple course. Pompey's cavalry charged that of Caesar, but the latter, pretending not to await the shock of the charge, retired a few hundred paces, and then advanced again, bringing with them the six veteran cohorts of the fourth line. Pompey's cavalry was flung back against the mountains and fled in disorder. The archers and slingers were butchered.

Meanwhile, on the front, Pompey had engaged all his troops simultaneously, and they had become exhausted at about the same time as had Caesar's first two lines, who were fighting on an equally extended front against superior numbers, but, being tougher and more war-seasoned, had managed to hold

their own. Just as both sides were completely worn out, Caesar's third line came up through the intervals in the two first and attacked. The action of these fresh troops on the front, while the six cohorts of the fourth line together with the cavalry took their left in rear, brought about the rout of Pompey's troops. Some fled to the mountains, others to the camp, and Caesar pursued them untiringly, and carried the camp by force. Pompey escaped to Larissa with only four horsemen, and his scattered followers endeavoured to escape in the same direction, but Caesar hastened by way of the plain to the fords over the Enipeus between Pharsalia and Larissa, covered them by entrenchments, and so cut off the fugitives. Tortured by thirst in those waterless mountains, they surrendered in crowds.

The Pompeians lost 15,000 men killed and wounded, or a third of their whole force—not a very large proportion for the period. Caesar lost only 200 men.

The battle took place in July (48 B.C.) ; two months later Pompey was assassinated in Egypt, and Caesar became unquestioned master of the Roman world.

The oligarchic government of ancient Rome was now abolished and the city opened her gates to the subject peoples. The great patrician Republic, whose spirit had braced the Roman armies to conquest throughout five centuries, had ceased to exist, and Rome had no longer a national ideal.

Three centuries later the empire had become decadent. A few great battles, such as Strasburg and Adrianople, stand out in the struggle with the northern invaders, who finally divided the empire.

Alone of the invaders, Attila's Asiatic hordes were beaten in A.D. 451 by a combination of the Romanised Gauls and the Germans.

The Frankish empire was dismembered in its turn, and the battle fought at Fontanetum in the Auxerrois gave birth to the modern states of France, Germany, and Italy.

The battles fought between the years 357 and 841 are perhaps, from the point of view of modern history, the most important that have ever taken place, but they are too little known to be described.

After the new European states had come into being in 841, France, owing to her geographical position, was exposed to attack from an Anglo-German alliance.

The victory of Bouvines guaranteed her independence and gave her a place among the great powers of Europe.

BOUVINES ¹

(1214)

WITH the reign of Philip Augustus begins the triumph of the Capetian monarchy over its powerful vassals. Normandy, Anjou, Guienne had been won back from the English, Flanders broken into, Burgundy and Champagne subdued. Philip was veritably King of France. In his person he represented the country.

Moreover, his reign witnesses an event without precedent, the waging of a national war in place of the old feudal war, the struggle between the King and his great vassals. Otto, Emperor of Germany, had made alliance with the King of England and the rebellious vassals of the French king, and they had even signed a treaty for the partition of France.

Besides the King of England and the Emperor, the coalition included Ferdinand, or Ferrand, Count of Flanders, and Count Renaud of Boulogne. The vassals who joined the Emperor were chiefly those of the Netherlands, the Dukes of Brabant and Limburg, and the Counts of Holland and Namur.

John could, no doubt, have joined his allies in Flanders with his whole army, but apparently he nourished projects of a more ambitious and complex

¹ See map and plan on page 37.

36 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

nature, consisting in effecting a landing between the Gironde and the Loire, and executing a converging movement on Paris simultaneously with his allies. If, in such conditions, the French had been beaten, the Capetian monarchy would have been ruined. But, as is well known, a combination of this nature never succeeds in war.

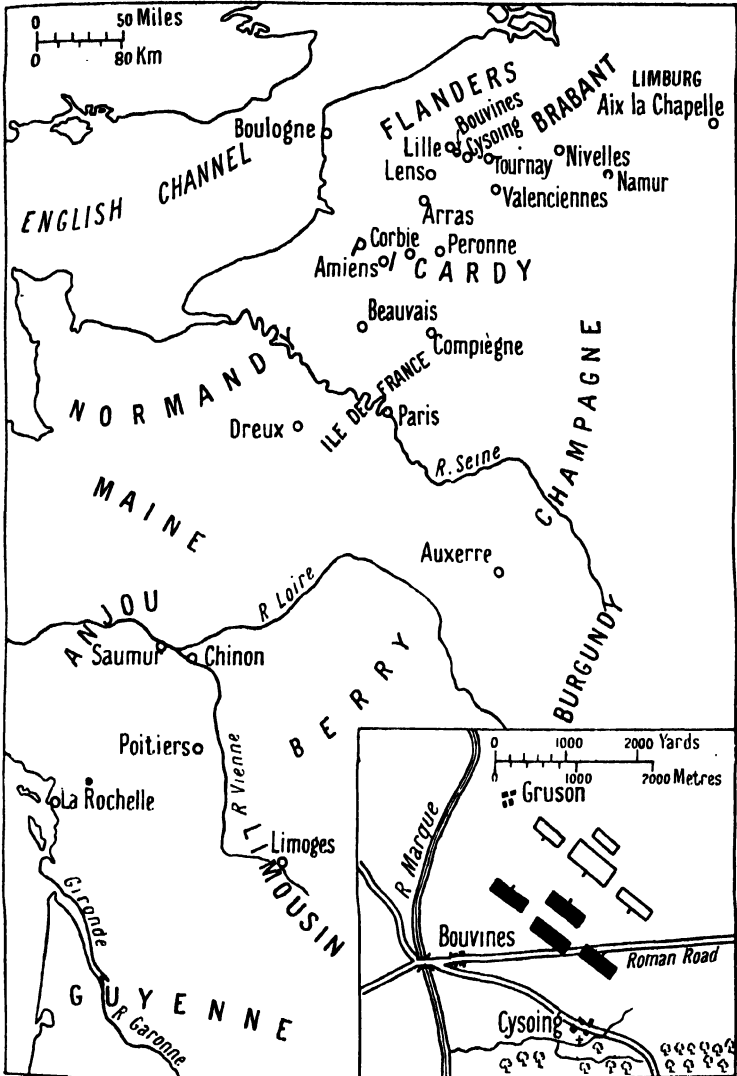
John Lackland disembarked at La Rochelle on February 15, 1214, with an army of mercenaries, and called the feudal levies of Guienne to his aid. He crossed the Loire and occupied Anjou in March.

Philip Augustus hastily collected an army and, taking command in conjunction with his son Louis, marched on Saumur and Chinon in order to threaten the English line of retreat. They, thereupon, retired precipitately on Limoges. John doubtless hoped by this manœuvre to draw his enemy away from Flanders, but Philip-Augustus was not to be distracted from the principal field of operations. He did not pursue the English into the Limousin, but, leaving his son in Berry with a force of 10,000 men to observe the enemy's movements, he himself returned northwards.

John again invaded Anjou at the beginning of June, but he wasted time over the siege of an unimportant fortress, and Louis, pushing a vigorous attack against him, found him ill prepared to fight, and, on July 3, drove him back across the Loire.

The Emperor of Germany had acted too late to profit by the diversion which his ally had effected. He had reached Aix-la-Chapelle on March 23, and could have reached Champagne or Picardy while Philip-Augustus

BOUVINES



NOTE.—On the inset French troops are shown in solid black, the German and their allies in outline.

38 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

was still on the Loire. He lost time in raising new troops, negotiating with his allies in the Low Countries and in celebrating his own marriage with the Duke of Brabant's daughter. It was not until June that he again moved forward, and it was only on July 12 that he joined his allies near Nivelles. On July 20 he was at Valenciennes, but by then all France was in arms.

His army was formidable enough. Though he was followed by only a few of the German barons, the Count of Flanders had provided a numerous body of cavalry, and the Earl of Salisbury a large force of mercenaries. This last contingent was somewhat lacking in homogeneity ; for Salisbury had taken into English pay knights of Holland, French turncoats, like Renaud of Boulogne and Hugh of Boves, Brabançons, and even mounted sergeants-at-arms (mercenaries less well equipped than knights).

Each of the two armies comprised about 1,500 knights, 5,000 mounted sergeants-at-arms, and 12,000 to 15,000 foot-soldiers. These numbers are only a matter of conjecture, arrived at by comparing the various sources of information direct or indirect ; documents of a definite character are lacking. It seems, however, that the allies were somewhat weaker in cavalry than the French, but possessed a certain superiority in infantry.

Philip, having concentrated his army near Péronne on July 20, took the offensive, and seized Tournai on the 26th. He then learnt that the Germans had arrived in Hainault and were near Valenciennes. Seeing his line of retreat in danger, Philip-Augustus started to march south-westwards in order once more

to place himself between the enemy and Paris. On July 27 he marched on Bouvines with the object of gaining Lens and Péronne.

Otto, who had accurate information of this, pursued him in the hope of surprising him at the passage of the bridge of Bouvines.

Philip-Augustus had caused this bridge to be widened or doubled by his engineers, so that the swamps of the Marque could be crossed with all possible speed. He had barely nine miles to go to reach this critical point, and he hoped to pass it before finding himself in presence of the enemy.

A flank-guard was watching the movements of the allies, and warning was sent to the King that there would certainly not be time to cross the Marque before they arrived.

Philip-Augustus at once resolved to face the enemy and offer battle before the bridge, and he drew up his army on a front of about 1,100 yards, facing north-east, between the road and the village of Gruson.

The Emperor of Germany was soon on the spot, and in his turn made his dispositions, while that part of the French army which had already crossed the Marque in the morning returned to take up its place in the battle line.

Until the whole force had come up, the French troops were not sufficiently numerous to present a front equal to that of the enemy.

Garin, Bishop of Senlis, therefore, who was a kind of chief of the staff of the army, rode hastily along the front, commanding the men to range themselves at wider intervals, extending their line so as not to

40 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

be outflanked. This order had no sooner been executed than the infantry came up, mainly the civic militia of the northern towns, Corbie, Amiens, Arras, Beauvais, Compiègne, etc. The red oriflamme of Saint-Denis was carried in their midst, while the blue pennon of the King of France was borne near him among the French cavalry.

The order of battle was as follows. On the right was the former flank-guard, comprising the feudal levies of Burgundy, Champagne, and the north-east. In the centre, surrounding the King, were his vassals of the Ile de France and the Count of Bar's contingent, together with seventy Norman knights. The greater part of the Norman contingent was with Prince Louis on the Loire. The left wing contained the contingents of the Counts of Dreux and Auxerre, and all those of the north-west, both knights and civic levies.

On the allies' left, towards the Roman Road, were the knights of Flanders and Hainault commanded by Count Ferdinand. In the centre was the huge mass of infantry raised in Flanders and the Low Countries, and known at that time by the name of Brabançons. Behind the infantry was stationed the Emperor himself with his German knights and the contingents of the Dukes of Brabant and Limburg, and the Counts of Namur and Holland. The right wing was composed of the troops in English pay, the knights and sergeants-at-arms of the Earl of Salisbury and the Count of Boulogne. The front of the allied army measured some 2,000 yards.

Behind the Emperor was the Imperial banner in form of a dragon, the pole crowned by a golden

eagle. It was mounted on a car drawn by four horses.

The allies had intended to make a converging attack on the French centre. While the Emperor charged in front with his German knights and Brabançons, Renaud of Boulogne and Ferdinand of Flanders were to close in on the two wings of the royal army. But they had not time to execute their project, for, urged on by the Bishop of Senlis, the French seized the initiative and began the attack.

First of all the Bishop sent 300 sergeants-at-arms from the right wing against the Flemish knights, who, disdainful of such adversaries, received their charge unshaken and quickly disposed of them. Thereupon they advanced in their turn and the fight began between the French right wing and the allied left. It was a medley of single combats, a sort of vast tourney, which remained for a long time undecided.

The infantry of the Communes had barely arrived when the battle began. They deployed in the centre and straightway advanced against the mass of the Brabançons. The struggle did not last long. The communal soldiery, not so well trained or disciplined as their opponents, were soon broken and thrown back, and the victorious Brabançons advanced in their turn, only to receive the charge of the King of France and his knights. These broke into the mass of foot-soldiery easily enough and started sabring right and left, but were themselves almost submerged in the weltering mob, and, though inflicting terrible slaughter, they came near to being borne down by sheer weight of numbers. It was thus that Philip-Augustus himself was thrown from his horse and

42 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

narrowly escaped being killed. At last this encounter ended. The Brabançon masses, rent apart and hewn down, began to scatter in all directions, and the French knights found themselves faced by the Emperor and his escort.

If the King of France had been saved by the ardour and devotion of his vassals, he had also, by his own courage and staunchness, proved himself worthy of rescue. His adversary discovered a like devotion in those about him, but he did not meet it with the same vigour and constancy.

Certain French knights resolved to seek out and attack the Emperor in the midst of his escort, and to take him prisoner. They succeeded in killing his horse and throwing him to the ground, but the Saxon knights rushed in a body to defend him. A terrible struggle began. A Saxon, Bernhard von Horstmaar, managed to drag the Emperor out of the scuffle and remount him, but his sovereign merely profited by this to take to flight, while his defenders continued the fight.

Otto did not stop till he reached Valenciennes, and his flight decided the issue of the day and gave the victory to the King of France. The Germans still held out for some time, but the knighthood of the Low Countries soon gave up the struggle and fled with the Duke of Brabant.

The fight on both wings was also turning in favour of the French. At the south-east on the Roman Road the *mêlée* and single combats had come to an end. The Counts of Saint-Pol and Melun had formed up a compact troop and charged home. The Flemings rallied and a fierce fight began. The Count

of Flanders was thrown down, wounded, and taken prisoner. Many of the leaders of the Flemish knight-hood were killed or taken captive. The French remained masters of the field here as well as in the centre.

On the other wing the allies had endeavoured to execute their original plan, and one of their leaders, Renaud of Boulogne, had separated himself from the right in order to close in on the French centre. The Count of Dreux had promptly attacked his flank, and the fight spread from point to point. The mercenaries led by Salisbury and Hugh de Boves engaged the feudal levies of Picardy in a furious combat. The mercenaries did not hold out long against the French chivalry. The Bishop of Beauvais struck down their leader, William Longsword, with a blow of his terrible club, and thereupon they gave up the struggle.

The rebel Count of Boulogne, on the other hand, sustained the fight ably and fiercely till the end of the day. He formed a troop of 700 Brabançons into a circle, with their long pikes crossed, thus making a refuge into which the knights could retire after each charge. In this way with a mere handful of men-at-arms he was able to hold out for a long time against the Counts of Dreux and Auxerre.

Some of the knights who had put the English mercenaries to flight closed in on the centre and joined in the final success.

Finally the troops of the centre turned their attention to the left flank where Renaud of Boulogne was still unconquered. A body of 3,000 sergeants-at-arms surrounded the Count's circle of 700 Brabançons and,

44 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

assaulting it on all sides, succeeded in breaking it up. With the final envelopment and capture of Renaud of Boulogne and his last defenders the battle ended. Apparently it lasted about three hours.

From the military point of view Bouvines is purely a feudal battle; the knights alone play a decisive part; they have easy work with the mercenaries, men-at-arms, or Brabançons; and the civic levies are of no use against either type of adversary. It is between the feudal contingents that the game is played.

It is then wholly wrong to see in Bouvines a victory of the civic levies, but none the less the battle was a national victory, in which the whole of France was concerned, whose results came home to all Frenchmen. Townsfolk and peasants all alike knew the danger that menaced the country; they knew what the allies threatened, and they greeted the news of victory with shouts of enthusiasm. In every village where the conqueror passed, streets, houses, the very roads, were hung with stuffs of brilliant hues, with leaves and flowers. Peasants and reapers interrupted their labours to greet the King. Paris gave him a triumphal reception; the townsfolk, the crowd of students, clerks, and people went out to meet him, singing hymns and psalms. The city was illuminated for seven successive nights.

This popular enthusiasm shows clearly the depth of the national feeling. As the royal power was consolidated, fusing the provinces together, the consciousness of nationality was born, and the first serious peril which threatened France made all feel

how great a place their country's glory held in their hearts.

Many great political events and many great battles took place between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the battles of the Crusades, though important from the military point of view, would not interest the general reader. The battles won by the English during the Hundred Years War, Poitiers, Crecy, Agincourt, are famous indeed, but how speak of them without telling how they were avenged in the many others which followed, from Cocherel to Castillon by which our forefathers "thrust the English out of France"? Likewise, the numerous battles fought in the wars of Italy, Fornova, Ravenna, Marignano, Pavia, Cerisole, etc., are interesting for more than one reason, but a limit must be set, and we have thought it best to pass on to the battle of Rocroi, the first victory of modern France.

ROCROI ¹

(1643)

THE victory of Rocroi can hardly be said to have saved France, for the situation was not so critical that the defeat of one small army in a clearing of the Ardennes would have brought about the kingdom's ruin. But certainly the Duke of Enghien's victory changed the fortunes of France. By its overwhelming completeness it destroyed for ever the prestige of the Spanish armies, while actually it so weakened the Spanish infantry that a second victory at Lens sufficed to annihilate it. Till Rocroi, the French had been carrying on an uphill fight with alternate successes and reverses the very names of which are hardly known to history. With Rocroi begins a glorious century of military achievement during which the victories of Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Berwick, Catinat, Vendôme, Villars, and Maurice de Saxe succeeded each other almost without interruption until the days of Fontenoy, Raucoux, and Lauffeld.

I. THE CONCENTRATION

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries France, torn meanwhile by civil war, was occupied in extricating herself with difficulty first from English, then from Spanish encroachments. She had not

¹ See map and plan facing page 58.

wholly got the upper hand at the time of Richelieu's death, and we must wait until Rocroi and Lens to see a decisive blow dealt to the power of Spain and the Empire in the Thirty Years War. It is, in France at any rate, the most famous of the battles which ended the hundred years of the wars of religion.

During these four centuries the art of war had undergone many changes. The introduction of gunpowder had revolutionised the conditions of warfare. The cavalry had for the most part abandoned the heavy armour of the Middle Ages; the infantry was now composed of an almost equal number of pikemen and musketeers. The Spaniards and Austrians still disposed their infantry in large masses, but the French, Swedes, German Protestants, and Dutch were accustomed to alternate small troops of pikemen and musketeers, the first acting as a support and shield for the second, when receiving charges, while the fire of the musketeers protected the pikemen. This last type of formation gave rather more mobility, but even so it was not yet possible for the infantry to decide an action. The cavalry remained the principal arm.

Artillery played an important part at the end of the fifteenth century and particularly at the beginning of the sixteenth, but the governments, ruined by constant wars, could no longer afford guns enough to be able to call upon this arm for great results.

At the beginning of 1643 all the armies of central Europe were in the field, from Artois to Piedmont, and from Catalonia to Pomerania. The French armies had had no great success since 1635. On the frontiers of the Low Countries, more especially, they had been beaten in 1639, 1641, and 1642, at Sedan,

48 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

La Marfée, and Honnecourt. The moral ascendancy belonged indisputably to the Spaniards.

It was in these circumstances that Louis XIII gave the command of the army of Picardy to the young Duke of Enghien, aged only twenty-two years; nor do we know what indications he had given of genius that he was thus chosen in spite of his youth to fill so important a post.

This young man, later known to fame as the great Condé, was faced with a most difficult task, which called for something more than strategic genius. The tone of the army was very low and had to be raised. "The death of Richelieu," says the Duke of Aumale, "had brought with it a general slackness . . . all eyes were turned towards the Court. Discipline was relaxed; every one came and went as he would, one to look after his affairs, another to seek some favour." The Marquis of Gesvres, who was in command of half the army at Chauny, was one of the first to leave his post. Several generals of brigade followed his example.

All the captains of the Scottish Guards left for Paris without leave, as did also the Swiss officers, and it was impossible to bring them to book, as the soldiers refused to march without them.

Moreover, the administration worked irregularly; the men were not paid. "There was no danger of mutiny, but desertion seemed likely to spread. The men of the so-called national regiments found it easy to disappear if they grew weary or discontented. . . . The army lacked enthusiasm and confidence; it had that appearance of gloomy resignation which comes of being accustomed to defeat."¹

¹ Duc d'Aumale, *Journée de Rocroi*, p. 28.

From the beginning the Duke of Enghien exhibited powers of organisation and command remarkable in so young a man. His influence made itself felt. His strength of character, and the careful attention which he gave to every department, soon restored order. He gathered his troops together, grouping them more closely, and quartered them in the numerous fortified towns of the district, where the distributions were regular and where discipline was re-established. He was soon able to write that the troops were in good condition, and that their appearance had improved since they were together and were on the march. The offensive movement, which he had ordered as soon as he took command, helped greatly to restore order and to raise the morale of the army.

Thus, from the moment of taking command, the young general found means of employing his natural gifts and the exact and thorough instruction which he had received in all branches of his craft.

The Duke of Enghien's opponent, Don Francisco Melo, was not a soldier by profession, and only exercised command of the Spanish army by reason of his position as governor of the Low Countries. It was under his nominal leadership that this army had been victorious, but its success was really due to the experience of the excellent generals who actually commanded it, Fontaine and Beck, Bucquoi and the Prince de Ligne, Albuquerque and Fuensaldaña. Several of these had been removed from the principal army for the campaign of 1643 and their absence made itself felt on the field of battle.

This Spanish army of 1643 was excellent. It was, indeed, composed of four quite distinct elements,

50 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

Spaniards, Italians, Walloons, and Germans, but all were old soldiers who had lived, fought, and conquered together for many a long day, and there was no admixture of raw recruits. Every soldier considered himself of noble rank, and thus absolute equality prevailed among them. Not one but could aspire to the very highest promotion. Beck had begun life as a shepherd, and Fontaine's father had been *maître d'hôtel* to the Dukes of Lorraine.

In the spring of 1643 the frontier line between the actual possessions of France and Spain ran roughly from Dunkirk to Metz.

On either side the troops were quartered in widely scattered cantonments, their disposition giving no clue to their leaders' intentions.

In the early days of May the Spanish army concentrated south of Valenciennes, but the troops encamped near the Sambre and the Meuse and in Luxembourg had not yet been moved. Therefore, in spite of the fears expressed by the governor of Arras, the Duke of Enghien believed that the Spaniards intended to act to the east of the Sambre.

A part of the French troops, the army of Picardy, had been encamped on the Somme and the Authie, while the army of Champagne was on the Oise, between Chauny and Guise. The disposition of the troops and the instructions issued to the Duke of Enghien emanated from the central administration, and were the work of politicians who knew nothing whatever of war. The two armies were supposed to be independent of each other; but this indepen-

dence was not complete. Theoretically the Duke of Enghien could not issue orders to the army of Champagne, but he was able to summon it to his aid in case of urgent need, though even then he could only call up successive detachments in such a manner that the King should always find this army in condition for any operations which he might desire to direct in person.

Added to this, the young general's instructions were purely of a defensive character, namely, "to discover the enemy's plans and prevent their execution, but at no time to take any action unless it seemed certain, in all human probability, that the result would redound to the glory of his Majesty's arms," and he was recommended to follow the advice of the *Sieur du Hallier*, whose name is thus preserved to history.

Fortunately the Duke's natural gifts of command, his high position as prince of the blood, even the disorder prevailing in the army, proved the means of overcoming all obstacles, and enabled him finally to enter upon the decisive battle with all his forces united.

The Marquis of Gesvres, who was in command of the army of Champagne, had deserted his post to go to Paris, and he was replaced by d'Espanan, who owed life and fortune to the Prince of Condé. This circumstance put the army of Champagne at the Duke of Enghien's discretion.

The army of Picardy on leaving Amiens was directed on Péronne and thence on St. Quentin, so that it should be ready to act on any point threatened by the enemy. The Duke of Enghien then withdrew all

52 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

the forces that could be spared from the fortified towns of the district, only strengthening the garrisons of Guise and La Capelle, which seemed to him in some danger. The army of Champagne assembled near Guise, and on May 14 both armies united between St. Quentin and Guise, where they learnt that the enemy had advanced by Le Quesnoy on Avesnes ; the Croats were already ravaging the country towards La Capelle and Hirson.

While our armies were on the march, the Spanish corps of the Sambre and Meuse had inclined towards Maubeuge, then, facing about suddenly, had arrived before Rocroi on the 13th by a forced march of forty-three miles.

On the 15th the whole Spanish army was assembled before the little fortress. By the 16th the covered way was commanded by their troops, but on the same day the French came up. At daybreak on the 17th a detachment of fusiliers surprised a Spanish post which had just carried a demi-lune and was only prepared for attack from the fort. These 150 fusiliers entered the town and reinforced the garrison, which was only 400 strong. Their presence served especially to raise its morale, for they brought news of the army's approach, and inspired a more energetic and resolute defence.

The French army had continued its march since the 15th at a rate of only twelve and a half miles a day. The Duke of Enghien did not hurry, as he had sent orders to the various governors of forts to send any men they could spare from the garrisons to join the army. He passed the night of the 16th at Vervins and camped on the 17th near Aubenton, where he

received all the reinforcements which he had demanded.

Don Francisco Melo, who had delayed the concentration of the corps commanded by Beck in Luxembourg, was still waiting for its arrival, and did not wish to fight until it had joined him, but the Duke of Enghien was facing him on the 18th.

II. THE BATTLE

Rocroi is situated in a clearing of the forest which forms a continuation of the Ardennes on the left bank of the Meuse. The marshy flats which surround the fort extended in 1643 to three or four miles beyond the ramparts. The copses, which separated them from the plain towards the south, were not at all dense, and were crossed by two fairly good roads.

Nearly 3,000 yards from the town, between it and these copses, there was a slight rise in the ground, a very favourable position for the Spanish army, which was about 27,000 strong, and it was Melo's intention to establish himself here for the coming battle.

But the Duke of Enghien gave him no time and himself seized the position coveted by the Spaniards, leaving them no choice but to form up on the line of their encampment at a few hundred yards' distance from the glaxis. Between the two positions lay a piece of very low ground, marshy towards the north-west, where it ended in a little pond.

The infantry formed the centre of the two first lines, between two wings of cavalry. The third line, forming a general reserve, was composed of three battalions alternated with four squadrons. The

54 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

total, eighteen battalions and thirty-two squadrons, was 23,000 men.

Each infantry battalion was made up of a square of pikemen flanked by musketeers.

Gassion, a fiery and experienced general, who had commanded the van-guard very brilliantly during the march, and had always supported the young prince's projects of offence in council, commanded the cavalry of the right wing, the larger portion.

The infantry was under the command of d'Espenan, and the cavalry of the left wing under that of La Ferté-Senneterre, while the reserve was led by the sturdy Sirot.

The length of the front was between 2,000 and 3,000 yards. Twelve guns only ($\frac{1}{2}$ to every 1,000 men) were ranged in front of the centre. The poverty of the State did not allow of horsing a larger number.

It was three o'clock when the French army began to form up in order of battle. The enemy took up position facing it, on a shorter front (about 2,000 yards), although their numbers were greater. At four o'clock the artillery of both sides opened fire. There was about 1,000 yards' distance between them. The Spanish guns, more numerous (there were eighteen pieces) and better served than the French, inflicted a loss of about 300 men.

Towards six the Spaniards had completed their dispositions. In the centre was their infantry in three lines, the first composed of ten battalions (*tercios*), each of the others of five battalions. The whole was ranged at close intervals, forming a single

mass with a front of about 880 yards. Half the cavalry was on either wing formed up in two lines.

Fontaine commanded the infantry, Albuquerque the left wing, and Isembourg the right.

Then occurred an incident which very nearly compromised the safety of the whole French army. Old l'Hôpital, who had been appointed mentor to the Duke of Enghien, was still haunted by the wish to avoid battle. His senile mind was possessed by the idea that the sole object of the operations was to relieve Rocroi, and that if this could be done there would no longer be any need to fight ; all would be saved. L'Hôpital, then, seeing that the disposition of the enemy's right wing left an open space in front of the French left and seemed to leave a clear road to the fort, urged La Ferté-Senneterre to make a dash forward and throw himself into the town.

The Spaniards could have profited by this untimely move of our right wing to crush it separately and then close in on the main army. They contented themselves, however, with repulsing it, and the incident caused the Duke of Enghien nothing but a brief period of anxiety, though it showed him what sort of support he was likely to receive in the battle from such lieutenants.

The armies passed the night opposite each other. At about midnight a deserter arrived and told the Duke that the Spanish musketeers were ambushed in the copse on our right ready to take our cavalry in the rear when it charged. At three o'clock in the morning, therefore, the pickets of the Picardy regiment surprised and cut to pieces these would-be surprisers ; not one escaped.

56 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

The Duke of Enghien now altered his dispositions. He divided the cavalry of his right wing into two almost equal parts. Gassion, leading the first, inclined to the right, then, wheeling to the left, threatened to envelop Albuquerque's cavalry, who faced to the left in order to withstand him. At this moment Enghien charged in his turn and, falling on the right flank of the Spanish horsemen, threw them into confusion and drove them from the field. Albuquerque attempted to make a fresh stand with his reserve, but the French charged once more in two converging directions. The Spanish left was scattered, and the Duke of Enghien became in a moment the chief and idol of his cavalry. "He was now able," says the Duke of Aumale, "to check his men without impairing their courage, to control them in the very heat of action, to give them their heads while yet retaining his hold on them; he was to have need of all his authority."

La Ferté-Senneterre, already forgetting his mistake of the day before, had not remained at the place assigned to him. He had advanced to outflank the Spanish right. Charged by Isenbourg's squadrons, he had been beaten and was himself severely wounded. The enemy's cavalry then proceeded to close in on our infantry, overthrew our musketeers and seized our guns. Old l'Hôpital rallied a few squadrons, threw forward the battalions of the left, and recaptured the guns. But a second charge of the enemy's cavalry resulted in their being taken a second time, and the Italian infantry now turned them against us. Our battalions made a good stand, but under fire from thirty guns began to beat a retreat.

They did not know where the general was, and they thought the battle was lost. But the reserve remained intact and Sirot prevented a further retreat. Between five and six o'clock he carried forward the whole centre, together with the reserve, against the Italians.

It was at this moment that the Duke of Enghien, having rallied his cavalry and left Gassion to continue the pursuit with a few squadrons, fell on the rear of the third line of the enemy's infantry, composed of Germans, and threw them back on the Walloons of the second line. In a few minutes the whole body of infantry was broken and put to flight.

The enemy's cavalry saw this happen just as they were charging Sirot's troops, and it had its effect on them; they charged weakly, and Sirot, seeing behind them the Duke of Enghien's white plume, pointed it out to his men, who thereupon dashed forward with the utmost enthusiasm.

The Italians, covered by a Spanish battalion which held firm to the end, succeeded in effecting a retirement towards the north-east. In this direction the scattered squadrons, both French and Spanish, were endeavouring to rally. Gradually the vanquished were driven from the field and took to flight.

"To the din and tumult of battle there succeed some minutes of silence and calm, almost as terrifying. Men and horses are exhausted, and all must have some few minutes of repose. All seem to be taking breath for a last struggle."¹

The Duke of Enghien had rejoined Sirot and had ordered Gassion to keep a look-out towards the

¹ Duc d'Aumale, p. 139.

58 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

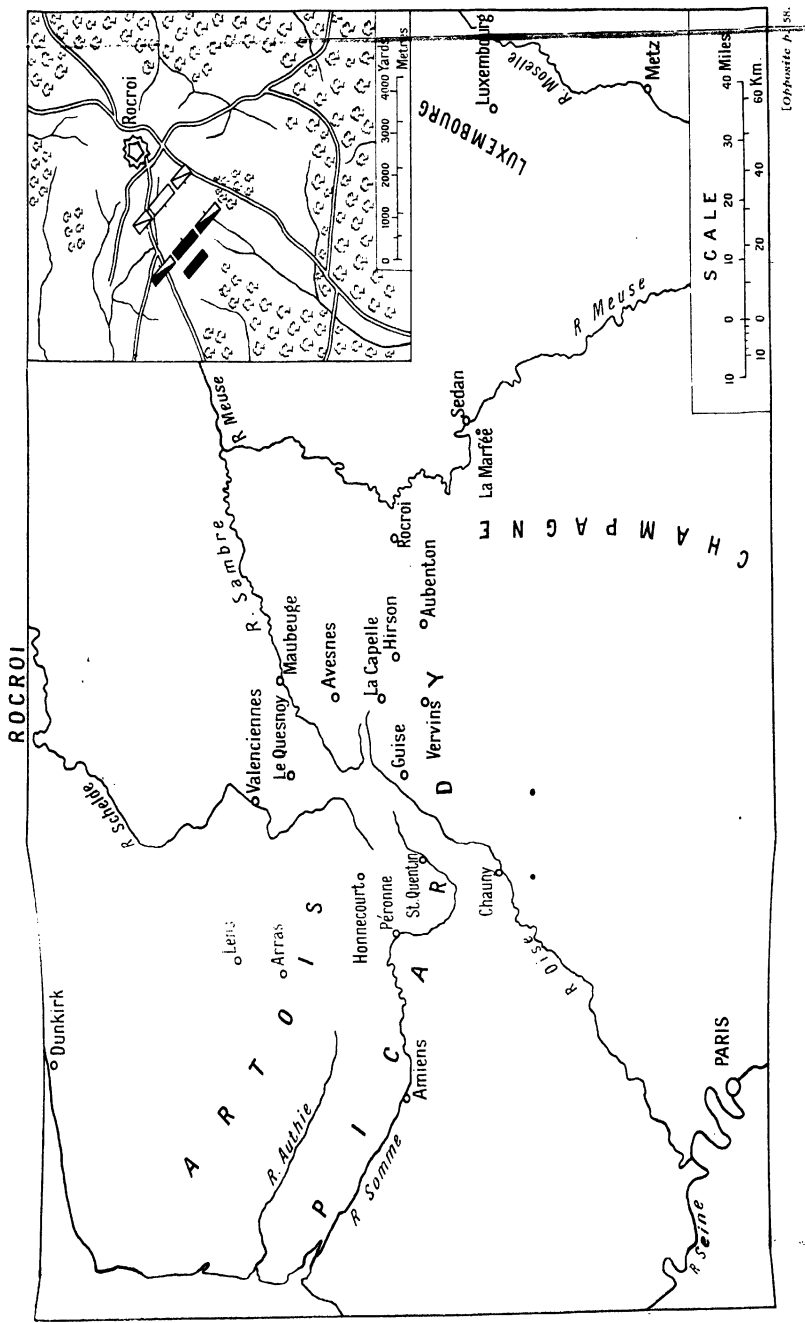
north-east, whence Beck might arrive at any moment. He then restored order throughout the army, both infantry and cavalry, which now completely encircled the Spanish *tercios*.

Soon the attack was renewed. The whole of our infantry advanced, preceded by its *enfants perdus*, or "forlorn hopes," whose fire obliged the enemy to close his ranks. When our battalions were within range, the Count of Fontaine gave a signal, and a terrible salvo forced the French line to draw back. Three times the attack was checked, but the fire of our sharp-shooters, if less violent in appearance than the Spanish salvos, produced more material effect in the long run. It claimed many victims, among them Fontaine himself. The Duke of Enghien judged that the moment had come for the decisive attack, and, massing his twelve pieces of artillery in front of one of the angles of the square, he brought up his squadrons.

At this moment certain Spanish officers came forward, waving their hats as though to ask for quarter. The Duke advanced towards them, and was received by a fierce volley, from which he only escaped by miracle. Thereupon the whole of the French forces, stirred to fury, hurled themselves, infantry and cavalry together, on the Spaniards. Nothing could stop them.

Of the 6,000 men who composed the Spanish *tercios*, 1,500 escaped; 4,500 were killed or taken prisoner.

Of the total of 27,000 men composing the Spanish army, 7,660 only escaped. Their losses were reckoned at 7,000 to 8,000 dead, 6,000 to 7,000



prisoners." The remainder disappeared and probably deserted.

On the French side the losses were about 2,000 dead and as many wounded.

The battle ended a little before ten o'clock in the morning.

It was time, for at this moment Beck was reported five miles away.

We must pass over in silence the victories of Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Berwick, Villars, the Maréchal de Saxe, popular battles like Denain and Fontenoy, and others which mark an epoch in military history like Fleurus.

It is no less a matter of regret that we cannot speak of the battles of Frederick the Great, but is the name of any one of them familiar to the French public for whom we write? Can we speak of Leuthen when we pass over Fontenoy, and when we must omit Arcole, Marengo, Austerlitz, Friedland, and Wagram?

Want of space obliges us to neglect all the battles of the eighteenth century, and, in the periods of the Revolution and Empire, only allows us to treat of Valmy, Jena, and Waterloo.

VALMY¹

(1792)

1. THE TROOPS

THE engagement at Valmy was not a battle, but it goes by the name of one now that time has revealed its full importance. As a fight it was of no account, but it was a great historical event. That is why Valmy ranks among the great battles of history.

At the outbreak of war, on April 20, 1792, France had only 188,000 men with the colours, and of these no more than 83,000 were fit to take the field on the northern and north-eastern frontiers.

Half of these—the whole of the arms other than the infantry, and a third of the infantry—belonged to the regular army; the remainder consisted of volunteer battalions and a few “Free Companies.”

Thanks to the persevering effort of all the French War Ministers from d’Argenson to Choiseul and La Tour du Pin, the regular army, during the last years of the monarchy, had been well organised, well disciplined, and well instructed. Choiseul’s reforms had, in fact, given it the character of a standing army, by establishing a homogeneous cadre of officers, all of whom were professional, while transferring to the State the business of the recruiting and upkeep of the regiments. Yet by force of circumstances this corps of officers was still divided into two fairly

¹ See maps facing page 126.

distinct classes : on the one hand the men of fashion, who cared little for the routine of their profession ; on the other, the regimental officers, whose whole life was spent in the barracks with the men. The first of these classes supplied most of the officers of talent and education ; the second produced a sturdy type, more capable of saving the army from disaster if need arose, of upholding its discipline, and maintaining its traditions. The *émigration* separated the two classes almost exactly ; the old war-dogs stayed with the colours, and it was from among them that the generals of the first Republican armies were drawn—Leclaire, Deprez-Crassier, Debrun, Kellermann, Duval, etc., men of great merit and little originality.

The *ancien régime* made little provision for the more advanced instruction of its officers outside that found in the artillery and engineer training schools which formed Bonaparte and Carnot. The infantry and cavalry officers had to learn what they could from reading and experience.

It is true that during the last half-century the army had been stirred by an intense intellectual movement. Treatises, historical and tactical, abounded, documents relating to the campaigns of the great French generals were published, practical experiments were organised with the troops in the camps and garrisons, and the *matériel* and use of artillery were the subject of close research. Hence the admirable *matériel* of our artillery, and the consistent theory of the gunners trained before the Revolution, which inspired their skilful manœuvres on every battlefield from Arlon to Montmirail. Hence,

62 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

above all, our supple and comprehensive infantry tactics, which were unique in Europe, combining as they did the use of lines, columns, and skirmishers. The Revolutionary and Imperial armies owed much of their success to the studies of the preceding generation.

Up to 1755 the drill regulations in use in the French army were both puerile and barbarous; but after the Seven Years War the Duke of Broglie and his chief of staff Count Guibert, father of the celebrated writer of that name, made great progressive reforms. The drill regulations of 1764, 1766, and 1769, which were drawn up under their supervision, introduced the use of close columns *à la Guibert*, and of skirmishers, and improved the system of line evolutions.

In 1771 a Prussian officer, called Pirch, brought to France, not indeed the Prussian infantry drill, which consisted merely of a few elementary movements, but the methods by which certain Prussian generals had achieved successful evolutions with lines of several battalions. The 1774, 1775, and 1776 regulations, which treat only of evolutions in line, were based on the ideas introduced by Pirch; but the admiration of things Prussian did not last long, and the regulations of 1778 on field service had quite another tendency; they take note of the part to be played by skirmishers. The manœuvres held at Vaussieux in that year, while they showed up the defects of the peculiar column advocated by Mesnil-Durand, showed even more clearly the advantages of column formation for movements preparatory to a battle. From this time onwards the French infantry

adopted almost unanimously the *colonne de Guibert* as its ordinary formation of manœuvre; the idea was to employ the line and the column in battle, and to use skirmishers freely. All the great manœuvres carried on during the reign of Louis XVI were conducted in accordance with these ideas, and the Commissions intrusted with the task of drawing up new regulations were chosen entirely from among the partisans of column formations.

The first of these Commissions drew up the provisional regulations of 1788, which treated very fully the formation into column not only of small, but of large units, and allowed of a line formation in two ranks as well as in three.

The opinions of all the colonels in the army were then collected on these regulations, and another Commission was appointed to revise them; it regulated the details with greater exactitude, and produced the regulations of August 1, 1791. Meanwhile a simpler code, appearing on January 1, 1791, had been hastily drawn up for the benefit of the *Gardes Nationales*. In it the two-rank formation was adopted, the number of formations was reduced to a minimum, and the directions were less minute than in the *Ordonnance* put forth by the Commission.

Thus, when about to go to war in 1792, the line troops were trained for the most part on the regulations of 1788, the *Ordonnance* of 1791 having hardly yet come into general use; the volunteer and National Guard battalions had been drilled either according to the code of January 1 or to the provisional regulations of 1788; and some of them

64 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

were using the drill-book of 1776, it being all their *officers could obtain in the towns where the regiments were enrolled*. When these volunteers were drafted to the various armies their training was changed to that set forth in the regulations of August 1, 1791.

However that may be, the troops organised before 1792 were properly trained and could make use, according to circumstances, of line, of column, and of skirmishers. They were capable of performing evolutions under fire, as was shown later at Jemmapes, and their drill regulations of 1788 and 1791 had given them a great advantage over other European armies.

The Prussian infantry, certainly, in spite of its old-fashioned tactics, still possessed so much discipline, steadiness, and precision that for several years longer it proved itself superior to our troops. Our regular army had suffered too great an upheaval to have preserved intact its self-confidence, or the necessary unity of feeling and of action; and our volunteers had had no time to acquire these qualities. Indeed, the volunteer battalions organised on and after September 1791 were mostly not formed or ready to start before the spring of 1792 or even later. Their morale was still that of raw troops.

Nevertheless these battalions of the first levy were the best ever sent to the Revolutionary armies. The rank and file contained a large proportion of old soldiers, and of militiamen and National Guards who had borne arms; and the cadres were composed almost exclusively of men who had served in the regular army, either with or without commissions.

Moreover these troops had been organised properly and in no hurry; they were armed and equipped before they set out, and their commissariat was well looked after. They were of the stuff of which good, solid battalions are made, but first they had to acquire what cannot be acquired hastily, unity of feeling and of action. That they had not already become very good troops by September 1792 must be ascribed to the political events which from day to day swayed and alarmed them, and shook their confidence and their discipline.

The line troops, for two years past, had been continually in a state of revolt and upheaval; they had lost their natural commanders, and were at present supposed to be led by officers whom they themselves had elected; and at the beginning of the campaign they were suffering extremely from loss of morale. But when, after a few bitter lessons, they made an effort to pull themselves together, they very quickly regained their superiority to the volunteers. The old habit of discipline was still there, and a little goodwill only was needed to make it revive.

Such was the army of 1792. It was greatly superior to those of 1793 and 1794, whose ranks were swelled by raw recruits and by battalions, hastily enrolled, and sent off to the camps innocent of equipment, commissariat, or training. Consequently these later armies were capable only of fighting in line without manœuvring, and were beaten by the Prussians though outnumbering them by two to one.

II. THE CAMPAIGN OF 1792

The 80,000 men at our disposal on the northern and north-eastern frontiers in the spring of 1792 were distributed as follows :

1. The Army of the North, under Rochambeau, consisted of 43,000 men, of whom 24,000 were in the Netherlands and 19,000 at Sedan.

2. The Army of the Centre, under Lafayette, was 17,000 strong, and lay between Montmédy and Bitsch.

3. The Army of the Rhine, under Lückner, 24,000 strong, was in Alsace.

The Army of the North had received instructions from Dumouriez, the Minister of War, to take the offensive in Belgium, and accordingly it set off in several columns on April 18 ; but on April 29 occurred the panics of Quiévrain and Tournai, which put an end to the offensive. The cry of treason was on all lips, and the generals had to lead their troops back to the camps, where they did their best to drill them.

Rochambeau now resigned, and was replaced by Lückner, who was in turn superseded by Biron, who was to take his orders from Lafayette. Dumouriez, having fallen from the Ministry, was sent to the Army of the North, where he was given the command of the camp at Maulde.

Then occurred a most extraordinary incident. Lückner and Lafayette, without informing the Minister, agreed to change places, while keeping each the greater number of his own troops. In July Lafayette was at Maubeuge, and Lückner had betaken himself to Metz with the troops from the camp

at Famars. Dumouriez refused to follow him, and remained at Maulde with his division.

This strange performance ended with the desertion of Lafayette and the disgrace of Lückner, who was sent to Châlons. On August 20 the command of the Army of the North was given to Dumouriez.

Before this date arrived the Prussians were in France. Brunswick's army numbered 42,000 men, and was followed by another force of 6,000 Hessians and 15,000 *émigrés*. The Austrians, meanwhile, were concentrating 49,000 men in the Ardennes and in the Netherlands.

On July 19 the Prussians brushed aside a French detachment at Fontoy, and effected a junction with the Austrians under Clerfayt before Arlon. They took Longwy on the 23rd, after three days' bombardment and parleying, and on the 30th they were before Verdun, whose population opened the gates on September 2. The Austrians were by then at Stenay.

On hearing of the capitulation of Longwy, Dumouriez left the northern garrisons under the command of Labourdonnaye, and hastened to put himself at the head of the troops at Sedan. They seemed to him incapable of standing up against the Prussians, and at first he thought of using them in the Netherlands, but on hearing that the enemy were at Verdun and Stenay, he started for Grandpré with the Sedan troops, and directed those on the Sambre to join him. At first he had only 19,000 men, but Duval brought 3,000 more from the Sambre, and finally, by order of the Minister of War, Servan, Du-

mouriez called on 10,000 more troops to join him under *Beurnonville* from the camp at *Maulde*. Counting these last he would have about 32,000 men.

Until *Beurnonville* should arrive the numerical inferiority of *Dumouriez's* little force (22,000 men) did not allow him to risk an encounter.

He tried to gain time by defending the defiles of the Argonne which he occupied on September 3, placing the bulk of his army in the large gap at *Grandpré*, and holding the four roads through the forest—*Le Chesne*, *La Croix-aux-Bois*, *La Chalade*, and *Les Islettes*—with small detachments. The weather was very bad, and the clay soil made the Argonne impassable except by road.

On the 12th *Clerfayt's* Austrians carried the defile of *La Croix-aux-Bois* without having to strike a blow. The same day the Prussians attacked our outposts before the gap at *Grandpré*, and were repulsed. On the 14th *Dumouriez* reoccupied the position of *La Croix-aux-Bois*, but the Prussians drove him out again the same evening.

The passage of the Argonne being thus forced at one point, *Dumouriez* was obliged to retreat quickly without waiting till the enemy came in touch. On the 14th he ordered all the bridges and fords across the *Aisne* to be strongly held, and he instructed his subordinates to concentrate on *Sainte-Menehould*.

The retreat began at three o'clock on the morning of the 15th. That same forenoon 1,500 Prussian hussars appeared, and one of the French divisions promptly scattered. Only the rear-guard, consisting of a battalion of Parisian volunteers, stood firm and kept the enemy off.

The same evening another panic occurred while the men were bivouacking, and some of the fugitives spread disorder as far as Châlons.

Dumouriez halted near Sainte-Menchould, on the heights of Valmy.

Meanwhile Beurnonville had come within sight of Dumouriez's columns on the 16th, but had mistaken them for the enemy, and had made off to Châlons. He did not join Dumouriez till the 19th.

Acting on ministerial orders, Kellermann, who had replaced Lückner in the command of the Army of the Centre, had marched on Châlons with as many troops as he could muster, some 22,000 men. He left Metz on September 4, but was alarmed by the enemy's successes and made a détour by Vitry-le-François; he even refused to join Dumouriez, but, on receiving a formal order from the Minister, he set forth again on the 16th, and arrived at Dampierre-le-Château on the 18th. He reached it with only 16,000 men, having left 6,000 on the way.

The two French generals had, therefore, 48,000 men in all, of whom 36,000 were on the battlefield.

Meanwhile Brunswick had ordered an Austrian-Hessian detachment, 15,000 to 20,000 strong, to march from Verdun on Sainte-Menchould by the direct road of Les Islettes; he himself with the bulk of his army, about 34,000 men, marched from Grandpré on Somme-Bionne and Somme-Tourbe, a few miles to the west of Valmy.

Clerfayt's Austrians and the *émigrés* did not come up till the evening of the battle.

70 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

The allied army was by this time suffering terribly from dysentery. The days during which they bivouacked in the rain, in that "Champagne pouilleuse" where dysentery can only be avoided by taking extreme precautions, had proved disastrous to them. Their line of retreat after the engagement at Valmy was marked by bodies piled up along the roadside.

The physical condition of his men at the moment of giving battle counts for a great deal in explaining the Prussian commander's conduct.

III. THE BATTLE

Dumouriez and Kellermann had encamped half a league to the west of Sainte-Menehould. The position of their advance-guards was indicated by three points, all from six to eight miles distant from the town—Mount Yvron, the mill of Valmy, and the inn of La Lune, which is at the fork of the roads leading to Châlons and to Suippes. Mount Yvron rises high above the plain, throwing out a steep rocky spur towards the east, but presenting a less inaccessible slope towards the west, while the mill of Valmy and the inn of La Lune are on heights which fall away gradually to the plain towards the west. Towards the east the ground sinks to a little valley whose waters collect into a pool, called L'Étang du Roi, and from there flow into the Aube, a brook which ends at Sainte-Menehould. The ground rises again between this dip and the Aisne, and becomes the height where Dumouriez camped on the 19th.

Mount Yvron was occupied by Dumouriez's ad-

vance-guard under Stengel, and the inn of La Lune by that of Kellermann under Valence.

Brunswick's advance-guard, commanded by Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, debouched on to the battlefield about 1,600 yards to the west of Mount Yvron, and marched from north to south, across the front of the French advance-guards. In doing so it came under the fire of the French artillery posted on Mount Yvron, but suffered little, and marched on towards the inn of La Lune. Valence's guns stayed the Prussians for a time and put their cavalry to flight, but Hohenlohe had six batteries to his two and dislodged him after an hour's fighting, Kellermann not being near enough to support him.

Kellermann now deployed a little farther back, with his right resting on the mill of Valmy and his left on the high-road near Orbeval.

Dumouriez had reinforced the detachment occupying Les Islettes, and General Duval, who was in command there, had now 7,000 men at his disposal, and had orders not to allow himself to be dislodged. Le Veneur with twelve battalions had been posted at La Chalade and at Vienne-le-Château, and told to protect the rear of the French army, and, if opportunity arose, to take the enemy in reverse.

The attack on the inn of La Lune ended at eight-thirty. By eleven o'clock the Prussians had made no fresh move. Dumouriez had sent Beurnonville's sixteen battalions to reinforce Stengel, and had kept only twelve battalions in reserve on his own left. They were to support Kellermann in case of need, and to keep control of the communications with the interior.

72 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

An attempt ordered by Kellermann, but essayed with too few troops, failed in front of La Lune, where the enemy had been reinforced.

At midday the mist lifted, and revealed the Austro-Prussian army drawn up on the plain between Somme-Bionne and La Lune. Towards one o'clock the King of Prussia gave the order to attack. He had planted a battery of fifty-four guns, which opened fire on the French lines on Mount Yvron and on the high ground where stood the mill. The French guns replied.

The Prussians now manœuvred so as to form three attacking columns, which began to march towards the Valmy—Orbeval front.

Straightway the French guns left off answering the Prussian batteries, and directed their fire instead on the three Prussian columns.

The French infantry, which the *émigrés* had promised Brunswick would run away on every possible occasion, did not budge. The Prussians heard the officers giving calm, unhurried commands, and witnessed the precise, orderly formation of the French battalions into three columns. It looked as if, instead of running, they intended to charge. From their ranks arose a great cry of "Vive la Nation!" and their bands struck up. Evidently they were about to charge.

But they did not start.

And the Prussians halted.

Each side gave up its attack, for neither had confidence; the French knew they were raw and untried, the Prussians were influenced by the reasons already explained.

So the infantry stood idle, while the artillery resumed its duel. The leaders of both armies showed themselves before the front, braving the cannon balls.

At four o'clock Brunswick gave his opinion that it was time to break off the action, but the cannonade did not actually cease till between five and six.

Each side had lost from 200 to 300 men.

The two armies bivouacked on the battlefield, but during the night Kellermann withdrew south of the Aube, the better to protect his communications, and the next day Dumouriez moved nearer to Sainte-Menchould. Brunswick then advanced his bivouacs to Mount Yvron, the mill of Valmy, and La Lune.

The Prussians might, therefore, have proclaimed themselves victors, but nothing was farther from their thoughts. By September 29 they had only 17,000 effectives out of the 40,000 who had crossed the frontier.

This was the time when Dumouriez and Kellermann, knowing the terrible conditions prevailing in the enemy's army, might have attacked; but negotiations had already begun, and the invaders were allowed to retreat unmolested.

Twenty years after the battle, Goethe imagined himself to have said on that evening of September 20, "On this day, in this place, begins a new era in the world's history."

From the military point of view, Valmy may be taken as an excellent illustration of a remark made by Napoleon: "In war you see your own distress, but you do not see the enemy's. You must show confidence."

74 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

His opinion of the way Dumouriez' conducted this campaign is worth noting: "Dumouriez's campaign in Champagne was very fine and very bold. . . . Probably, if he had gone on for another eight or ten years he would have made a great name."

But from another point of view he finds Dumouriez's position too daring—"and that is a great deal for me to say, for I count myself perhaps the boldest general who has ever lived, and most certainly I should never have stayed in his position, so dangerous should I have considered it. I can only explain his action by supposing that he was afraid to retire."

This judgment must not be accepted unreservedly, for Napoleon here, as in all his other historical appreciations, forgets to take into account the difference of epoch. As a matter of fact, neither Dumouriez nor Brunswick dreamt that they were doing anything very extraordinary in fighting on an inverted front. They were of the old school, and acted as the generals of Frederick's time would have acted. It must not be forgotten that half of Frederick's battles were fought with fronts reversed, and that little inconvenience resulted for the defeated side, because there was no pursuit.

But to Napoleon that was ancient history. It never occurred to him that a quarter of a century before he was victorious at Marengo, Ulm, and Jena, or vanquished at Leipzig, no one, when preparing for battle, thought about lines of retreat.

J E N A ¹

(1806)

I. THE FRENCH ARMY

EVER since the French Revolution, Prussia's policy had been irresolute and ambiguous. She had failed to act in 1805, and had cut a sorry figure at the time of Austerlitz. It was apparent that she no longer held the position won for her by Frederick the Great, and national pride demanded a brilliant victory to restore the lost prestige. To this end, the Prussian Government provoked war with Napoleon in 1806, and dragged with her Russia and England at the moment when they were about to sign a treaty of peace with France.

Napoleon had left the Grand Army "quartered for repose" in South-West Germany between Coblenz, Passau, and Lake Constance until the Czar should have ratified the treaty of peace.

He himself returned to Paris, and it was there that news of Prussia's hostile intentions reached him on August 22. At first incredulous, it was not until he received on September 3 notification of the Czar's refusal to sign the treaty of peace that he realised the existence of a fresh coalition and the inevitability of war. Although the position of the Grand Army, ready to take the field again at a moment's notice, enabled Napoleon to surprise Prussia in the act of making

¹ See maps facing pages 120, 108 and 118.

76 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

preparation, he was unwilling to play the part of aggressor and preferred to await an unquestionable *casus belli*. He ordered his troops to assemble when the Prussians should have entered Saxony, then a neutral state.

The mobilisation of the Prussian army had begun on August 10, but without waiting for its completion Prussian troops invaded Saxon territory on September 6, thus forcing Saxony to join the coalition.

Napoleon retorted on September 19 by ordering the Grand Army to assemble between Mayence and Amberg.

On the 21st the King of Prussia left Berlin to join his troops on the 26th, and dispatched an ultimatum to France. Napoleon set out from Paris on the 25th, and took command of the Grand Army at Würzburg on October 1.

At first sight the French and Prussian plans of campaign seem symmetrical. Each side intended to seize the offensive; Napoleon by marching from Bamberg in the provisional direction of Berlin, the Prussians by moving from Erfurt towards Würzburg. Napoleon meant to cut Prussia's communications with her Russian ally; Prussian strategy aimed at intercepting the French line of retreat on Mayence and Strasburg. To obtain a decisive result, each side risked everything: Napoleon, moving from Bamberg towards Berlin, skirted the frontier of a neutral if not hostile Austria, whilst Prussia placed her armies between the French and the North Sea. In a struggle engaged on these lines, one of the two adversaries cannot escape collapse and must be utterly

destroyed ; it was a duel to the death, and from the outset of the campaign we can foresee the decisive nature of the battle of Jena.

It does not seem possible to detect in the qualities and defects of the opposing armies the causes which predestined the one to victory, the other to defeat. Many unsuspected flaws were discovered in the Prussian troops of 1806 after the event, but there is no sign in the course of the campaign that they affected the results of the battle, and their importance has been largely exaggerated.

In 1806 the French army was certainly very near perfection : the lower grades, after the sifting of previous wars, were composed of tried and experienced soldiers, steady in action and skilful in minor operations, and the camp at Boulogne and the campaign of 1805 had thoroughly accustomed them to the evolutions of the drill-book of 1791 which nowadays seem so complicated. There was also a smaller percentage of young soldiers in the army than at any other period in its history ; those drafted to regiments for the campaign of 1805 had been well schooled at Ulm and Austerlitz ; only Dupont's and Gazan's divisions, which had suffered heavily at Haslach and Dürnstein, showed in 1806 a large proportion of conscripts.

It must be observed, however, that the foot-soldiers of the Grand Army received scant musketry training, and that its excellent skirmishers had been self-taught on the battlefield.

The infantry drill book of 1791, since so often criticised, was much superior to any other infantry drill regulations of the period. Its combination

of evolutions in line and movements in column offered a wide choice of formations; troops could be marched either along narrow roads in column of threes or fours, or by highways or across open country in column of platoons. In battle, each battalion formed a small, handy, mobile column, and a division or army corps moved in a group of these small columns which could mould themselves to the ground, following its folds for cover, dilating or contracting as occasion demanded. When in touch with the enemy, skirmishers, acting also as scouts, were thrown forward with orders to engage him, inflicting as much loss as possible before the battalions came up into line. These, when they reached the extreme range of the enemy's guns, opened to deploying intervals and then formed line; the skirmishers fell back on the wings of their respective battalions or regiments, and the musketry fight began. The lines thus deployed performed difficult evolutions under fire, such as changes of front, or the passage of fresh troops through the intervals of the battalions already engaged in order to come up in first line. At the same time a whole battalion extended on the fringe of a wood, while narrow columns forced their way through the streets of a village. In short, the infantry drill regulations employed in the campaign of 1806 were adaptable to every contingency; experience had taught the most practical procedure for each occasion, and the infantry of the Grand Army was eminently fitted for manœuvring and for fighting.

The artillery had inherited all the traditions of the old Royal Corps and was admirably instructed. The

officers appointed in haste during the Revolutionary Wars had been carefully weeded out during the Consulate, and the majority of those remaining combined technical knowledge with soldierly qualities and practical experience. The *matériel* was similar to that used by the other European powers, but was superior in weight of metal. The Prussian artillery showed a large proportion of light cannon, 3- and 6-pounders; whereas half of the French guns consisted of 8-pounders, a third of howitzers and 12-pounders, and only one-sixth of light 4-pounders. Unfortunately the French artillery was numerically weak, as in 1805 there had been difficulty in obtaining sufficient teams and waggons, and five years were yet to elapse before the French artillery assumed the proportion of 4 guns to every 1,000 men, judged necessary by Napoleon.

The ammunition used was either round shot or grape. The latter was generally employed against infantry and swept the ground for 500 yards in front of the guns. To obtain good results from round shot, notwithstanding their small size and the inaccuracy of the fire, it was necessary to fire the gun at a low angle so that the shot might keep close to the ground and ricochet. The effective range of a gun firing round shot varied from 900 yards to 1,300 yards according to the calibre of the gun and the slope of the ground.

The cavalry was thoroughly experienced; though hampered by poor mounts, it was excellent in reconnaissance; in battle it showed much coolness, cohesion, and deftness in evolution, but its ardour was revealed in pursuit; then alone its powers of

80 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

swift movement found full scope. If the horses were mediocre, the troopers were tempered steel and men of long service with but few recruits amongst them.

The morale of the Grand Army was incomparable; the remains of the revolutionary spirit and a passionate national pride inspired contempt of the enemy, while confidence in Napoleon's genius and the veritable adoration which the majority of the soldiers felt for him, completed their conviction that they were invincible. And he who believes himself to be invincible is very near to being it.

The question of the discipline of the Grand Army is a difficult one. It is beyond doubt that marauding was rife; but where means of support are not assured, the existence of this horrible practice proves little against the discipline of an army. What is more important for us is that at times the men treated their officers with scant respect; there are numerous examples of general officers being insulted at night when there was disorder among the billeted troops; but the military spirit showed itself in other respects: in action subordination was perfect and the obedience and devotion of the soldiers knew no limits. Finally, many a poor hero worked miracles furbishing his shabby uniform; for the officers were extremely particular about the turn-out of their men. Thus, among this mass of contradiction, it is difficult to determine whether the Grand Army was or was not disciplined.

To conclude, it should be noted that this army of young men who were at the same time old soldiers had experienced regimental officers and non-commissioned officers, but was commanded and led by

young generals. Napoleon, Murat, Lannes, Davout, Soult, Ney, were all between thirty-five and thirty-nine years of age.

II. THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

The Prussian army was assuredly inferior to that of Napoleon, and its numerous deficiencies were due to the fact that as the instrument of Frederick the Great's victories it had remained untouched, an object of veneration. In recruiting, discipline, instruction, tactics, and administration its usages were antiquated.

In order to play a rôle out of all proportion to the strength of her population, Prussia not only enlisted in her army a number of volunteers, for the most part foreigners, but resorted to a system of compulsory military service, limited approximately to the rural class. These national recruits or "cantonists" served with the colours for a few months, and were then liable for service during a period of twenty years. Called up at rare intervals, they were in the same position as our reservists, and this constitution of the Prussian army is not one of the least interesting points in the battle of Jena: the troops encountered there by Napoleon's army resembled those which we shall put in the field in the next war. The Prussian army of 1806 comprised 80,000 men raised by voluntary enlistment, called "foreigners," and 158,000 "cantonists," the equivalent of our recruits and reservists respectively.

This system of recruiting has been blamed for its lack of homogeneity and for the inequality of the burden of service; it must not be forgotten, however,

that it had given Frederick the Great his victorious troops, that it was the source of the armies which, outnumbered by three to one, persistently defeated our soldiers of 1793, and which, in spite of detestable leading and antiquated tactics, were to make the Grand Army pay dearly for the victory of Jena.

Whatever may have been the Prussian system of recruiting, the Prussian army of 1806 was well disciplined, and the soldiers, animated by the strongest possible national spirit, were trained to carry out with absolute exactitude the evolutions of their drill-book and their volley firing.

It is true that the Prussian infantry drill regulations for movement in close order were still those of Frederick the Great and dated with scarcely any modification from 1743. They differed greatly from the French ordinance of 1791 ; there was no question of manœuvring in columns, only line tactics were practised, but it must be allowed that the precision with which the evolutions were performed compensated in some measure for the intricacies of the system.

The Prussian foot-soldier was an even worse shot than his French contemporary, musketry training was limited to volley-firing, and the instructors endeavoured to ensure simultaneity of fire rather than accuracy of aim.

The use of skirmishers, contemplated by Frederick the Great from 1768 onwards, had been recognised as indispensable. After 1787 his successors paid attention to their organisation and regulation ; they would have done better to insist on practice and to train their troops in this art. Battalions of light infantry (fusiliers) were formed, each company of

the line was ordered to have ten men as skirmishers, and numerous edicts were issued on the subject, but the soldiers were not practised in battalion skirmishing.

In the campaigns of 1793 and 1794, according to the usual practice of the eighteenth century, large bodies of skirmishers had been formed, of battalions of fusiliers, for use in woods, but the mistake was made of uniting company skirmishers for a similar purpose.

The chief fault of the Prussian infantry lay in the fact that all the soldiers were not taught to skirmish, for in that case any battalion could have been so employed instead of the few carabineers specially told off.

Thus the Prussians ignored the surest means of inflicting loss on the enemy ; but, as had been seen in 1793 and 1794, material losses do not always produce defeat. The Prussian infantry charges were vigorous, and, in spite of all our skirmishers, had easily triumphed over the battalions of Revolutionary volunteers.

The Prussian cavalry, especially the hussars, had kept intact the tradition of Frederick the Great—daring and energy.

The whole Prussian army was imbued with the memory of past victories. Valmy was regarded as unimportant, an affair that the Prussian command had not carried through for ill-defined reasons, chiefly connected with diplomacy and dysentery. But 1793 and 1794 had proved that for the Prussians the French army was still the *gibier de Rossbach*. When Mayence was relieved and Custine forced to retire on Alsace, three squadrons of Prussian dragoons

had sufficed to scatter a column of the French army, killing and wounding 200 and taking 1,435 prisoners and three guns. The same day four Prussian battalions had thrown back 7,000 French into Mayence. When Moreau marched on Pirmasens with 14,000 men he had been utterly routed by a few Prussian battalions and lost thirty-six guns. Hoche attacking Brunswick at Kaiserslautern had been repulsed with heavy loss and retired with such precipitation that he covered in two days the ground it had taken him ten days to traverse when advancing to the attack. In 1794 Möllendorf had won further victories in the same district, while Blücher's hussars had captured 2,000 prisoners and seventeen guns.

Thus, on the whole, the Prussian army of 1806 did not consider itself degenerate, and went to battle with confidence. It would have been better, certainly, if the infantry had been trained to manœuvre by columns and if greater use had been made of skirmishers, but such as it was, the Prussian army was as brave and well disciplined as any in the world, and only required good generals in order to gain the victory.

Unfortunately these leaders did not exist; Frederick the Great died, leaving no one to replace him, and for the lack of a good general the Prussians were to march to destruction instead of victory. There was lacking also that which in a well-directed army alone can take the place of a great commander, a group of generals possessing instruction and good sense. The instruction possessed by the Prussian officers was not such as could preserve the army from disaster.

Frederick the Great neglected to teach his successors the secrets of his art. The best among them had retained from his lessons the spirit of attack, and we shall see that old Möllendorf stands out in this respect from the younger commanders. Frederick's instructions to his generals did not touch on the veritable principles of war, but only comprised rules as to detail. These instructions then were strictly followed, even if a false direction was given to the operations as a whole.

Frederick founded several institutions for military instruction, but the course of instruction was confined to the auxiliary, the technical side of war—topography, camp planning, fortification, etc.

When Frederick the Great conducted the grand manœuvres which took place annually, he was careful to arrange that the general idea to be followed in each part should be rational and the manœuvre directed with vigour and good sense. But after his death his generals could only imitate the form of his manœuvres, which though excellent were of little value without the master mind that inspired them. Moreover those manœuvres carried out between 1786 and 1806 were limited to mimeries of battle, mere evolutions, and the generals could learn little from them of the real difficulties of a commander in war: keeping the forces united, collecting the greatest number possible for a battle, obtaining information, and making up his mind and acting.

Dispersion of the troops, dissipation of effort, and never-ending indecision were the essential faults which, manifest from the first day of the campaign, led to the downfall of the Prussian army.

86 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

Though it must be allowed that too many vehicles were attached to the troops, and that the methods of quartering and of supply were antiquated and formal to the last degree, these and similar errors, though they have been justly criticised, were of no consequence in the battle of Jena.

III. THE OPERATIONS

The differences between the French and Prussian commands showed itself before any operations took place by the manner in which each utilised its forces. Napoleon assigned all the troops possible to the active part of the Grand Army, which at the beginning of the campaign consisted of 160,000 men, closely followed by 13,000 Bavarians destined for the secondary operations.

The Prussian army should have numbered 254,000 men, or 272,000 including the Saxon contingent; but the numbers not brought up were such that the effective force amounted only to 171,000; the remainder encumbered the fortresses. Twenty-five thousand were held in reserve on the borders of Poland, and during the first days of the campaign other detachments were made; thus, instead of 250,000 there were only 110,000 on the battlefield.

The weakness of the Prussian command was revealed to an even greater extent by its indecision. The Duke of Brunswick was commander-in-chief, but the King was continually beside him, and the important decisions were made at councils attended by several generals. Opinions clashed; there was discussion, but no action. Orders had been issued aiming

at a concentration round Erfurt. Brunswick intended to debouch from there on Meiningen so as to reach Würzburg, but Hohenlohe favoured an offensive by way of Hof. At length a middle course was chosen : to debouch in two divisions by Gotha and Hof. This manœuvre was in progress when on September 27 Brunswick reverted to his original plan, though, owing to the movements already begun, he could not hope to reach Meiningen before October 11.

In the meantime further discussions took place, and Brunswick, uncertain as to which course to follow, remained stationary. Learning that the French were assembled between Würzburg and Amberg, his half-hearted desire for the offensive faded away, and, submitting to Napoleon's initiative, he merely planned to counter-attack " by proceeding by an oblique and rapid movement in whichever direction the enemy shall follow." On the 8th, hearing that the French were marching towards Saxony, by way of Coburg and Bayreuth, he again took counsel. Some of those present wished to forestall the French by crossing the Saale near Jena, while others advised taking up a position before Leipzig. Brunswick was still undecided and remained with the bulk of the army near Weimar. Hohenlohe, assuming that the offensive suggested by himself had been adopted, acted accordingly, and, concentrating the Saxons to the south-east of Jena, pushed forward his advance-guard to Saalfeld.

Such, then, was the position of the Prussian and Saxon troops at the moment when the French struck upon them.

Napoleon's plan of campaign was to march pro-

visionally in the direction of Berlin, starting from Bamberg ; then when he came up with the Prussians to attack them in such a manner as to keep them separate from the Russians. In the first days of September he did not anticipate meeting with any serious resistance prior to crossing the Elbe, for the Prussians might be supposed to have profited by the lesson administered the previous year to Mack and to be awaiting the arrival of their ally before being committed to battle. But, from the 29th, the Emperor knew that the Prussians were assembling in the neighbourhood of Erfurt and he foresaw the manœuvres which he was to carry out : “ My intention,” he wrote on the 30th, “ is to concentrate all my forces on my extreme right, leaving all the space between the Rhine and Bamberg entirely unoccupied, so as to have nearly 200,000 men assembled on the same battlefield. . . . The nature of the events which may take place cannot be foreseen, because it would be to the advantage of the enemy, who supposes my left to be on the Rhine and my right in Bohemia, to overlap my left, because in that case I shall be able to throw him back on the Rhine.” And a few days later he added : “ Woe betide them if they hesitate and lose a day.” His idea, therefore, was to march until he was on a level with the Prussian army and then to turn on it and attack it.

Without waiting for further news of the enemy, Napoleon issued the order to march, and the Grand Army crossed the ridge of the Frankenwald on October 8 out of range of a Prussian attack. Only three roads were available by which to traverse the forest, and two army corps marched along each ; the

Guard, the cavalry, and the parks following the middle one, which was also that of Head-quarters. On coming out into the plain it was possible that the heads of the columns might encounter the enemy: Napoleon therefore cautioned each of his marshals only to engage very inferior forces, and in the event of meeting more than a division of the enemy to refuse battle and to await the arrival of the whole army before pushing forward. But the Prussians were still hesitating around Weimar; the troops which Murat and Lannes scattered on October 9 and 10 at Schleiz and Saalfeld were merely detachments.

These first reverses shook the spirit of the Prussians, hitherto so certain of victory. Their sturdy infantry and their dashing hussars had not only been beaten, but had not held very long against the vigour of the French attacks.

The information received by Napoleon still indicated the enemy between Erfurt and Weimar, with the possibility of a rapid move eastwards, by means of which they would endeavour to recover their principal communications with Russia and Berlin. Napoleon therefore continued to march towards the north-east, so as to be sure, in any case, of cutting his adversary's principal lines of retreat. He pushed his right vigorously forward as far as Gera on October 11, deploying his army on a front of thirty-seven miles facing the enemy's supposed position.

But the enemy still did not move. On the 12th Napoleon moved obliquely to his left towards Naumburg, Jena, and Kahla in preparation for an attack on Weimar; but the Prussians might still have tried

to escape either by the south, moving off by Saalfeld and Plauen, or by the north, reaching Leipzig by way of Naumburg. Consequently the army corps on his wings were kept in echelons on the flanks, so as to reach the enemy should he succeed in slipping past Davout, who was on the way to Naumburg, or Augereau, who was making for Kahla.

In any case Napoleon determined to march against the enemy on the 13th. The moment had come to attack without further manœuvring. At the distance he was from the enemy, his movements must be reported too late to permit of the Prussians acting accordingly, and this was to be proved during the night of the 13th–14th. Napoleon had to endeavour to foresee Brunswick's plan so as to decide beforehand on the best course of action. "I envelop the enemy completely," wrote Napoleon on the 12th, "but I must have an indication of his plan." To this end he launched Murat and his cavalry towards Leipzig and Naumburg so as to procure evidence from which he could infer the Prussians' intentions, evidence which could only be collected on the enemy's lines of communication with Dresden and Berlin.

The Emperor, without waiting for Murat's report, prepared to deploy his army facing the direction of Weimar; at the same time throwing a strong force into Naumburg, the essential point on the Weimar—Leipzig road. Lannes and Augereau were ordered to establish themselves firmly round Jena, while Davout and Bernadotte were to hold the passages of the Saale at Naumburg and Kösen. Ney was to march to Roda, within three leagues of Jena. Only Soult's army corps was to remain stationary,

doubtless for the reason that if he proceeded towards Zeitz he could not possibly reach Jena in time to fight on the 14th, while if he advanced towards Jena he would be too far from Leipzig to outstrip the Prussians, had they taken the Naumburg road on the 12th and so slipped past Davout.

Napoleon, during the night of the 12th-13th and the morning of the 13th, learned that Lannes had occupied a position beyond Jena and was in sight of 30,000 of the enemy who seemed disposed to give battle.

Davout's and Murat's cavalry had overrun the Leipzig and Naumburg plain, and their reports, in conjunction with those of Lannes and Augereau, made it known at 9 a.m. on the 13th that the King of Prussia, after a short stay at Erfurt, had returned to Weimar on the 11th. Further, that a pontoon train sent to join the Prussians by way of Weissenfels and Naumburg had been captured on the 12th, as it retired again towards the north-west.

"At last the veil is lifted: the enemy is beginning to retreat on Magdeburg!" cried Napoleon on receipt of this information. He nevertheless considered it possible that the enemy wished merely to concentrate before Weimar so as to give battle there. "I do not know," he wrote, "whether he does not wish to give battle instead of retiring." "I believe," he added later, "that the enemy will try to attack Marshal Lannes or that he will be off."

In any case it was necessary to march on Jena, either to support Lannes or to attack the enemy before he had time to retreat on Magdeburg. All the results promised by Napoleon's manœuvre had been

achieved: "The Prussian army is caught in the very act and is turned," wrote Napoleon. "All the intercepted letters show that the enemy has lost his head. They hold councils night and day and do not know what steps to take. You will see that my army is united and that I bar the roads to Dresden and Berlin against them." And he concludes: "My intention is to march straight for the enemy."

Although the indication supplied by Davout and Murat pointed to the enemy's retreat on Magdeburg, Napoleon was too well aware of the uncertainty of reports and of the inferences drawn from them to march his army at once through Jena on Weimar. In view, then, of the possibility of a Prussian movement towards Leipzig by Naumburg, he ordered Soult to remain at the fork of the roads from Gera to Jena and Naumburg, only dispatching one of his divisions towards Jena. He himself hastened to Jena, which lies on the direct road to Weimar and whence Lannes had perceived the enemy's encampment. The cavalry divisions and the Guard were ordered to proceed to Jena with all speed.

Napoleon joined Lannes in front of the town, and, seeing the Prussian camp for himself, sent word to Soult and Ney to march as quickly as possible and concentrate at Jena.

IV. BEFORE THE BATTLE

The situation on the night of the 13th-14th was as follows: Lannes bivouacked with the Guard on the heights of the west of Jena; Augereau lay near by in the valley; Ney's advance-guard was in the outskirts of Jena, the rest of his corps in echelon

behind it; one of Soult's divisions, with his cavalry, had already traversed the town, and two more were to arrive at midday on the 14th. The cavalry divisions which had "overrun the Leipzig plain" were ordered to proceed to Jena; Bernadotte's corps was between Naumburg and Dornburg, and that of Davout at Naumburg.

Though Napoleon still felt uncertain of the enemy's plan of action, notwithstanding the information brought in, the position of these two corps, respectively nine and eighteen miles to his right, must prevent the Prussians from escaping him in that direction.

He examined the enemy's camp in the course of the evening of the 13th; and coming to the conclusion that the whole Prussian army lay between him and Weimar, resolved to attack it the following day in front of Jena with all his available troops—Lannes's, Augereau's, Soult's, and Ney's corps, the Guard, and the cavalry. Davout and Bernadotte were ordered to debouch from Naumburg and Dornburg and, proceeding by Apolda, were to fall upon the Prussian rear. Davout was left free to act "provided that he takes part in the battle."

During the same night Davout sent in fresh information, well authenticated, announcing the movement of a considerable body of troops from Weimar towards Eckartsberga on the road to Naumburg: the enemy's outposts had been pushed forward nearly to the Saale. Napoleon realised therefore, before morning, that only a portion of the Prussian army lay in front of Jena and that he could not count on Davout's intervention.

94 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

Davout's information of the enemy's movements was correct; the Prussian command had once more changed its plan, and Napoleon's most rational provisions were at fault.

After the partial checks at Schleiz and Saalfeld, part of the Prussian army had been concentrated at Jena under Hohenlohe, part at Weimar under Brunswick and the King of Prussia. October 11 and 12 passed in restoring order among the troops, whose morale had been disagreeably shaken by the first incidents of the campaign, and who were constantly being scattered by panics.

Brunswick thought for an instant of defending the line of the Saale at Jena, but on the morning of the 13th he learnt that the French were at Naumburg. He therefore abandoned this project, and for the first time realising his perilous position he foresaw a turning movement which must cut his communications with Berlin, and hastened to order the retreat of the main army on Naumburg by way of Eckartsberga. Hohenlohe's corps and half that of Rüchel were to cover the movement in front of Jena and would follow the next day.

During the night of the 13th-14th the position of the Prussian troops was as follows: Schmettau's division lay in front of Auerstedt and the bulk of the army camped in the rear of the village, where Blücher's cavalry was to join them at 2 o'clock in the morning.

Hohenlohe had 50,000 men between Jena and Weimar: a detachment of 5,000 under Holtzendorff watched Dornburg; Tauenzien's division, 8,000 strong, lay facing Jena, between the villages of Closewitz and Lützenroda, with four Saxon battalions

behind them ; the main body (22,000 men) camped between Isserstedt and Capellendorf facing south, and Rüchel's force of 15,000 were behind Weimar.

Hohenlohe gave no orders for the co-operation of his various divisions and, in addition, expected the French attack, not from the direction of Jena, but from that of Saalfeld. Finally, when ordered to cover the retreat of the main army he shared Brunswick's opinion that this mission precluded his assuming the offensive.

Thus the battle which was about to begin was willed by Napoleon and submitted to by the Prussians. To quote the Emperor, they were " taken in the act " ; in a word, they were about to be attacked at a moment when they had made no disposition either to receive or deliver an attack. Hohenlohe's camps and Brunswick's columns were not more scattered than were the French corps, but the Prussian command had prepared no scheme for their co-operation in a general action. Napoleon, on the other hand, although half his troops could not arrive until the afternoon, had regulated every detail so that the battle might develop methodically and be conducted with vigour. Thanks to the enemy's inertia it was fought exactly on the lines foreseen by the Emperor from the beginning of the campaign. On October 1, knowing the Prussian army to be in the neighbourhood of Erfurt, he had marched with all speed in the direction of Berlin, so as to arrive on a level with the Prussians and then to turn upon them before they had time to put themselves across his path. He had succeeded, and, as he had foretold in a letter written on September 30 to his brother Louis, he was now

about to attack the enemy from the south-east in a north-westerly direction. The direct advance as far as Gera and Naumburg, the wheel at a right angle immediately followed by the attack, the area occupied by the Grand Army and the seizing of Jena and Naumburg in order to bar the way of retreat, were all in accordance with the original plan. Napoleon himself said: "The system of a battle is conceived in the system of a campaign." He gave no more striking example of this than in 1806, and to understand the battle of Jena it is necessary to review the campaign.

V. THE INITIAL SITUATION

As we have shown, Hohenlohe's army was divided into four groups: a detachment 5,000 strong under Holtzendorff watched Dornburg; the advance-guard of 8,000 men, commanded by Tauenzien, was on the ridge of Closewitz and Lützenroda with four battalions a little distance in rear; the bulk of the army (22,000 men) lay close to Capellendorf, and 15,000 men under Rüchel were behind Weimar.

This division of the German troops was to bring about four corresponding phases in the battle:

1. The driving back of Tauenzien's advance-guard by the troops which Napoleon had at his disposal at dawn.
2. The intervention of Holtzendorff's detachment and its subsequent defeat by the division of the extreme French right.
3. Hohenlohe's decision to give battle with his

main army close to Vierzehnheiligen just as the French reinforcements came up.

4. Rüchel's intervention and defeat after Hohenlohe's discomfiture.

The French, though quite as widely distributed as were their adversaries, were under the direct control of the Emperor, who, knowing the position of each unit, regulated his operations accordingly and coordinated their efforts.

This dispersion of the Prussians was due to the lack of any command-in-chief.

On the night of the 13th-14th Napoleon bivouacked on the Windknollen surrounded by the Guard and by Lannes's corps, consisting of Suchet's and Gazan's divisions, approximately 20,000 men, and 28 guns. The foot-guards were 5,000 strong with 14 guns.

On the left, in the Mühlthal, was the first division of Augereau's corps with its cavalry, a total of about 8,000 men and 12 guns.

Soult's first division under Saint-Hilaire, which had played the most important part at Austerlitz, lay at Jena and consisted of 9,000 men and 12 guns.

Ney's advance-guard of about 4,000 men and 4 guns was to arrive at Jena during the night.

At dawn, then, on the 14th Napoleon had at his disposal 46,000 men and 70 guns against about 45,000 Prussians with about 120 guns. The enemy's superiority in artillery was not apparent, owing to the scattered position of his troops.

The morale of the opposing forces was very dissimilar. The experienced and warlike soldiers of the Grand Army were brought up to a pitch of enthusiasm by the famous bulletins, for the Emperor was careful

to announce every success with a touch of exaggeration. By means of these publications he explained to his troops the development of his plans day by day, at the same time depicting and ridiculing the confusion which reigned in the Prussian forces. As a result of this policy, every soldier in the Grand Army understood the task before him and derived confidence from his adversary's manifest weakness.

Certain ingenuous critics have mistaken the bulletins for official returns destined to enlighten posterity on the subject of effectives, captures, etc., and on being disappointed have denied the historical value of these documents. If, on the other hand, they had recognised in the bulletins a formidable instrument of war, they would have attached no importance to the figures, but would have learnt from these explanations of Napoleon's ideas the most profound lessons in military art and history. Nothing explains the operations of 1806 so clearly as the bulletins.

The morale of the Prussian troops, which had remained in the neighbourhood of Erfurt and Weimar since the beginning of the war, was good, but Tauenzien's soldiers, beaten at Schleiz and Saalfeld, were badly shaken. On the 11th, 12th, and 13th panics were frequent, and one of these had completely disorganised all the units in the streets of Jena. Whole batteries disappeared, desertion weakened the effectives already diminished by fighting, and the battalions of fusiliers which were to encounter Lannes in the first phase of the battle of Jena were approximately at half strength.

VI. BATTLE OF JENA--FIRST PHASE

Napoleon gave the signal for battle at six o'clock on the morning of the 14th. As on the morning of Austerlitz, both armies were wrapped in a dense fog. Unlike at Austerlitz, however, Napoleon required a clear atmosphere, for, in order to debouch his army on the plateau with as little delay as possible, it was necessary to carry the approaches to Closewitz and Lützeroda; and though this task could be easily accomplished in fine weather by an outflanking attack delivered through the woods, the fog rendered this impossible.

Lannes, unable to deploy the main body of his troops, ordered the advance-guards of his two divisions to make a frontal attack on the two villages. At first it was only a battle between skirmishers that raged in the fog, but soon the artillery intervened, firing at close range. Great quantities of ammunition were expended and both sides suffered severely. Suchet, thanks to his numerical superiority, succeeded in dislodging the enemy from Closewitz, but on the left Gazan's light infantry were outnumbered and driven back by the enemy, who was checked in his counter-attack by the French artillery. The scattered condition of the Prussian forces as opposed to the concentration of the French troops gave the latter a superiority in artillery at this point, although on the whole they possessed fewer guns.

At length the Prussians and Saxons evacuated Closewitz and Lützeroda, leaving only a few detachments of skirmishers in the Closewitz and Isserstedt woods. Tauenzien rallied the remains of his force behind

100 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

Vierzehnheiligen, and, with the aid of the four battalions which had camped in his rear, reconstructed a line of about 5,000 men strongly supported by cavalry.

The French had scarcely begun an offensive movement on Vierzehnheiligen when Tauenzien attacked them furiously, threw them back on Krippendorf and the Isserstedt wood, and then resumed his retreat towards Weimar by way of Klein Romstedt. One French regiment formed up into a square was alone able to withstand the repeated charges of the Prussian cavalry.

Meanwhile the head of Soult's column debouched from the Closewitz wood, where it had had to await its artillery until 10 a.m.

Lannes and Soult, utilising approximately only their light infantry, had now cleared the area necessary for the deployment of the main army. Tauenzien's troops had nearly disappeared, and the heads of Ney's and Augereau's columns were debouching on the battlefield.

The first phase of the battle was over, the second, which was to be scarcely more than an interlude, had already begun on the French right wing.

VII. SECOND PHASE

Soult's skirmishers had hardly reached the northern fringe of the Closewitz woods when they encountered Holtzendorff's detachment, about 5,000 strong, which had camped facing Dornburg. Hearing gunfire, Holtzendorff had hastened up and, deploying his troops between Lehesten and Rödigen, attacked the

French as they advanced. His skirmishers engaged those of Saint-Hilaire (Soult's corps) shortly after 10 a.m.

Holtzendorff, like Tauenzien, had deployed numerous skirmishers; the bulk of his troops were drawn up according to the formula of Frederick the Great—echeloned in oblique order with the cavalry on the wings. He had twenty-two guns, but he posted them in such a manner as to restrict their field of fire.

The whole French division was drawn up in line, its right well beyond the village of Rödigen, out of sight of the Prussian artillery, and marching under cover behind the ridge so as to strike on the enemy's left flank. Holtzendorff judged this menace to be so decisive that he retreated behind the Lehesten stream.

At first his cavalry charges were successful, but Soult's squadrons suddenly appeared, scattered in an instant cavalry and skirmishers alike, and riding through the column of infantry transformed it into a flying mob and captured 400 prisoners, 6 guns, and 2 standards.

Holtzendorff was rallying his troops behind Merkwitz when he was attacked a second time. The French still widely outflanked his left, and their cavalry charged. In a few minutes the Prussian detachment was broken and in headlong flight on the road to Apolda, leaving nearly all its guns in the hands of the French.

Saint-Hilaire did not continue the pursuit, as Soult decided to turn back to the left and co-operate in the principal action, where the Emperor intended that he should outflank the Prussian left.

Holtzendorff, though put out of action, again rallied the remains of his detachment, placing his cavalry and one battery of artillery at Hohenlohe's disposal. He reached Apolda at 2 p.m. with what was left of his infantry, only to be swept away in the rout that ended the battle.

VIII. THIRD PHASE

The main body of Hohenlohe's army went into action piecemeal. First a Saxon division proceeded to the west of the Mühlthal without orders, simply because that had been its position the evening before; then the cavalry with its horse artillery was formed up on both sides of Vierzehnheiligen. Shortly afterwards Grawert's Prussian infantry division followed, and towards 11 o'clock a line of fifteen Prussian battalions faced Lannes's corps; the Saxon division prolonged this line at a little distance to the right.

While these manœuvres were taking place and while Lannes's corps recovered breath, Ney debouched with his advance-guard, consisting of two cavalry regiments and five battalions. Without waiting for orders from the Emperor or taking time to get to know the situation, he threw himself upon a Prussian battery stationed to the south of Vierzehnheiligen.

His cavalry made a successful charge and, scattering the Prussian right, not without severe loss, carried off the ammunition waggons of the Prussian battery and forced the enemy's cavalry to retire and re-form at some distance to the rear.

The leading division of Augereau's corps, which debouched at this moment from Lützeroda, was formed up in second line.

At least this division and Lannes's artillery were prepared to support Ney's foolhardy attack on a force double his own, and Vierzehnheiligen, momentarily abandoned by both sides, now became the centre of interest.

Hohenlohe reassembled his cavalry behind the infantry battalions and ordered these to attack. The Prussian line, advancing in oblique order, notwithstanding the French infantry and artillery fire, marched as quietly and regularly as if on parade.

Ney's skirmishers gave way before this fine attack of the Prussian and Saxon line and evacuated Isserstedt and the neighbouring little woods, but by Napoleon's order a detachment of Augereau's troops was able to retake these *points d'appui* without much difficulty.

Hohenlohe, on the other hand, did not dare to attack Vierzehnheiligen, and halted in the outskirts of the village under the murderous fire of the French skirmishers. The Prussian artillery succeeded in destroying several of our guns and blew up some ammunition waggons. The fighting was terrible and the casualties on both sides were very heavy.

Lannes, to end the struggle, combined a frontal attack and a flank attack on the enemy's left with six battalions. Hohenlohe bent back his left into a defensive flank, so as to face the attack, but the numerical superiority of the French enabled them to sweep back the Prussian line in disorder. Whereupon the Saxon cavalry rode into action and by means of a brisk charge forced the French to retreat in their turn to where they had started from.

The Prussian infantry advanced again to the

attack, but Hohenlohe, learning that heavy French columns were continuously debouching from Jena, contented himself with ordering his artillery to bombard and set fire to Vierzeñheiligen.¹

IX. THE GENERAL ATTACK

Such, then, was the state of the battle when Napoleon, at last able to make use of Ney's corps and Murat's cavalry, decided to carry the day by a vigorous attack. In preparation for this he assembled a battery of twenty-five guns.

All the available troops were to advance : Lannes and Ney were to make a frontal attack ; Soult's division, rid of Holtzendorff, was to outflank the enemy's left, while Augereau forced his way between the Prussian right and the small Saxon corps thrown forward along the Mühlthal.

During the preparations for this offensive movement the skirmishers on both sides kept up a violent fusillade until 11.30 a.m. Augereau was the first to attack. His infantry, charging in skirmishing order, scattered the few battalions uniting the Prussian army to the Saxon corps, but were held by the latter until Ney and Lannes could intervene. They, in their turn, were waiting for Saint-Hilaire's division of Soult's corps to advance and attack the enemy's left flank.

It was not until 1 p.m. that Saint-Hilaire debouched to the north of Krippendorf, all his battalions in line, and the Emperor immediately ordered Lannes

¹ We have been careful to describe this struggle in detail, notwithstanding its intricacy, so as to make clear how furious the contest was and how the Prussian defeat was due, not to the troops, but to the weakness of the command.—Author's Note.

and Ney to resume the attack. The enemy's cavalry and part of his artillery sought to oppose this turning movement, and the French hurled themselves into the gaps thus occasioned in the Prussian line. This manœuvre stupefied Hohenlohe's troops; they became bewildered and slackened their fire, whilst ours redoubled in intensity. One by one the Prussian battalions gave way; their officers rallied them again and again, but in the end were powerless to stem the tide of retreat.

When the charge sounded along the whole French line the remains of Hohenlohe's army began to fall back. Supported by a few battalions which were still intact, the Prussian line fought desperately as it withdrew, but Lannes sent forward his artillery at a gallop to pour canister into the retiring troops at close range and the retreat quickened. For some time it was executed in fairly good order, covered by the cavalry, but at length the pressure of the victorious French troops broke the line. A part of the Prussian army made for Weimar, the rest turning northward were reassured by the sight of Tauenzien's troops rallied to the north of Gross Romstedt and maintained a certain order to the last, nevertheless leaving 2,500 prisoners, 16 cannon, and 8 standards in the hands of the French cavalry. Murat had arrived, and took part in the pursuit from 1.30 p.m. onwards. On the Weimar road, notwithstanding all Hohenlohe's efforts, the retreat became a rout. Only one battalion, Winkel's Saxon Grenadiers, remained unshaken by the common ruin and repulsed every French attack.

This general offensive on the part of Ney, Lannes, and Saint-Hilaire enabled Augereau to devote himself

exclusively to the Saxon troops in the Mühlthal. His second division had joined him without delay.

The Saxons, threatened with being surrounded, formed squares by battalions and hastily retreated.

Half the Saxon division was soon broken up and dispersed, the rest regained the Weimar high-road in good order. Six squadrons of cavalry, which were watching the Saale valley to the south of Jena, ignored the battle raging close at hand and remained stationary throughout. The French were forced to return and deal with them later.

X. THE FOURTH PHASE--RÜCHEL'S INTERVENTION

Rüchel's corps, comprising about 15,000 men, had camped to the west of Weimar. Rüchel, hearing the cannonade in the early morning of the 14th, broke camp and resolved to proceed midway between the Jena and Eckartsberga routes previously followed by the two divisions of the army. But at 10 a.m. he received a request from Hohenlohe to take the Jena road. He should have come up with Hohenlohe about 1 p.m., at the very moment when Lannes and Saint-Hilaire were attacking conjointly, and his 15,000 men added to Hohenlohe's force of 22,000 and the remains of Tauenzien's detachment would have nearly balanced Lannes's two divisions, Saint-Hilaire's division, and Augereau's 1st division. In this case Napoleon must have resorted to the divisions of his second line to win the battle.

Rüchel's delay, probably due to inopportune deployments, was considerable, and it was not till 2 p.m. that he crossed, at Capellendorf, the little valley

which leads down to Apolda. Tauenzien, meanwhile, had taken up a position on his left, and as they advanced they were joined by 1,500 fugitives.

Rüchel drew up his line methodically according to the oblique order formula— the centre in advance, the cavalry on the wings— then moved forward. He had scarcely arrived between Kötschau and Gross Romstedt when he was attacked by the French cavalry in pursuit of Hohenlohe's flying troops. Rüchel repulsed this attack without difficulty, but almost at once a strong force of French artillery surmounted the ridge which hid the scene of the previous fighting, and coming up at a gallop, unlimbered and began to pour canister into the Prussian line. At the same time French skirmishers appeared on the outskirts of Gross Romstedt and threatened the Prussian left flank. Rüchel's troops remained unshaken. Notwithstanding heavy losses, they marched resolutely on the French batteries, who were forced to limber up and retreat in order to avoid capture. But it was Rüchel's last success. Lannes's and Ney's infantry were already appearing on the ridge within range, while the whole of Saint-Hilaire's division was debouching to the west of Gross Romstedt behind its skirmishers.

In a few minutes the Prussian line, decimated by fire and threatened on its flank, began to withdraw. Some of the battalions retired in good order, others turned and fled. The Prussian and Saxon cavalry charged and drove back the French hussars, but was checked in its turn by infantry fire, and soon afterwards Murat's cuirassiers made a clean sweep of the battlefield. They broke through in succession the

Prussian battalions, which were striving to hold firm, and captured 4,000 prisoners and 5 standards.

The Saxon troops who had escaped Augereau's clutches near the Mühlthal, and had victoriously thrown back his cavalry, now arrived near Kötschau only to be ridden down and taken prisoner by Ney's and Lannes's hussars.

By 3 p.m. the victory was complete, and only a few battalions held in reserve by Rüchel still fought behind the Capellendorf stream to delay the pursuit.

Some of the fugitives streamed towards Weimar, others made for Apolda, but the apparition of Soult's entire corps on the left flank of the latter caused them to turn aside towards Weimar.

At 4 p.m. Murat began the pursuit with his dragoons and a brigade of cuirassiers supported by a battery. At 5 p.m., having already taken numerous prisoners, standards and cannon, he arrived before Weimar. There he encountered a few Saxon troops, who were striving to cover the rallying of the fugitives, but quickly dispersing them, he rode into the town, which was choked with men and vehicles.

Darkness put an end to the pursuit. At Ulrichshalten, between Weimar and Apolda, Tauenzien managed to maintain his detachment in good order and to drive off Soult's attacks until nightfall.

The Prussian army lost 25,000 killed, wounded, and prisoners, the French army about 4,000.

XI. THE BATTLEFIELD OF AUERSTEDT

The battle of Jena was fought on the road from Jena to Weimar, that of Auerstedt on the road from Naumburg to Weimar. The main Prussian army,

encamped near Auerstedt on October 13, sought to escape Napoleon's grasp by marching on Naumburg on the 14th. Marshal Davout, detached on the right wing of the Grand Army, had orders to attack in the direction of Apolda in the event of the battle being fought between Jena and Weimar. Moreover he perfectly understood the Emperor's manœuvre and that his own rôle consisted in blocking the road to Berlin and in pushing back the Prussians towards the south.

The encounter, therefore, was to take place on the high-road between Weimar and Naumburg, the Prussians seeking to fight their way through, Davout endeavouring to throw them back by means of an outflanking movement to the north.

Davout had about 27,000 men, Brunswick more than 50,000. Each adversary was ignorant of the other's strength, but Davout expected to encounter a considerable force, whereas Brunswick was convinced that only a small detachment lay before him. This gratuitous supposition falsified his dispositions and caused his defeat.

Whilst the Prussian and Saxon troops who fought at Jena were scattered before the battle, Brunswick's forces were assembled under his hand round Auerstedt and could be easily employed simultaneously. This course occurred to him, but thinking to defeat the French without elaborate arrangements, he sent his divisions into action successively. The battle of Auerstedt, then, like that of Jena, presented various phases determined by the entry into line of successive Prussian divisions.

The battlefield of Auerstedt lies amidst scenery

of a special nature ; *it is the basin of a little stream called the Liss Bach.*

The road from Naumburg to Weimar, by the eastern bank of the Saale, crosses the river by the bridge of Kösen and immediately climbs the heights by means of a fairly steep ascent. At $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the bridge the culminating point is reached (hill 270), and the road continues due west, descending to the village of Hassenhausen and thence to the bottom of the Liss Bach valley to the villages of Taugwitz and Poppel. To right and left the heights which surround the valley extend in the form of a horse-shoe, eventually losing themselves in the woods on the right, and ending on the left between the Ilm, the Auerstedt stream and the Liss Bach in a pronounced spur surmounted by an eminence known as the Sonnenkuppe.

Davout had occupied the bridge of Kösen and the heights immediately above the village on the 13th with a battalion and a half of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry, and on the 14th he hastened to complete this critical passage.

XII. ENGAGEMENT OF GUDIN AND FRIANT

The troops were on the march by 3 a.m., and at 6 a.m. Gudin's division crossed the bridge at Kösen.

The same dense fog prevailed in the region of Auerstedt and Kösen as at Jena, enveloping Gudin's soldiers as they marched from Kösen to Hassenhausen. Davout, who accompanied them, sent forward his aide-de-camp, Colonel Burke, with a mounted escort, to obtain information. This reconnaissance came in

contact with the point of the Prussian cavalry in the village of Poppel, and after exchanging sabre thrusts and capturing several prisoners, rejoined the French column between Hassenhausen and hill 270 shortly after 7 a.m.

Gudin, warned of the approach of the enemy's cavalry, drew up his battalions on each side of the road in close columns, ready to form squares, and continued his advance.

From time to time gusts of wind lifted the fog, when it was possible to see 1,000 or 1,500 paces. Thus Gudin approaching Hassenhausen was able to perceive the enemy's cavalry. He ordered his battalions to form squares, and the artillery hastily unlimbering in the intervening spaces, opened fire.

The attacking Prussian cavalry consisted of four squadrons supported by one battery. This was put out of action in a few minutes, and the squadrons, unable to obtain any results, ended by wheeling off to the left.

The regiments at the head of Gudin's division pushed forward their skirmishers towards the Liss Bach 1,000 paces in advance of the columns, which prepared right and left of Hassenhausen to bear the weight of the Prussian infantry attack until Friant's and Morand's divisions could arrive. It was about 8 a.m. and Friant was only then debouching from Kösen, while Morand's division was still far away.

On the Prussian side, Schmettau's division was approaching the Liss Bach, Wartensleben's division had just left its bivouac, and the rest of the army was not yet in motion. Blücher endeavoured to assemble his cavalry, with which he hoped at once to obtain a

112 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

decisive result. He could only count ten squadrons collected from every division of the army, but proceeded nevertheless to favourable ground near Spielberg so as to fall upon the French right flank.

Schmettau's skirmishers threw back those of Gudin on Hassenhausen in half an hour. The bulk of Schmettau's division then advanced and prepared its attack by means of artillery fire while Blücher made ready to charge. Gudin was assailed at the same time by nine battalions, sixteen squadrons, and twenty-four guns.

Fortunately Blücher's untimely ardour enabled the French first to repulse the cavalry charges, then to devote all their strength to withstanding the advance of the infantry.

Blücher charged again and again until the exhausted state of his horses compelled him to desist; whereupon his thirteen squadrons, having suffered heavy losses, made off in a confused mass as far as Eckartsberga, and were no more seen on the battlefield.

Meanwhile the King of Prussia and Brunswick were still regulating the deployment of Schmettau's division. The leading battalion had crossed the Liss Bach three-quarters of an hour before, but as there was only one point at which the valley could be crossed, the main body of the division had not had time to complete its passage and deploy. The line, therefore, had to form up under the French artillery fire and suffered enough to make it necessary at first to fall back.

The Prussian batteries unlimbered to retort, and

Brunswick ordered Schmettau to await Wartensleben's arrival before advancing to the attack.

Just at this time (about 9.30 a.m.) Friant's division was arriving behind that of Gudin, and Davout ordered Friant to proceed northward on Gudin's right to outflank the Prussians on that side towards Spielberg. The light cavalry brigade of the corps was directed to accompany him.

Davout succeeded at this moment in uniting all the 12-pounders of his corps in a big battery to the north of Hassenhausen.

He had evacuated Hassenhausen so as to face Schmettau's battalions, and the village was unoccupied precisely as was Vierzehnheiligen at the same hour in front of Jena.

Wartensleben was ready at length and advanced briskly to the attack on Schmettau's right (9.45 a.m.).

At first the battle wore a totally different aspect on the two wings. While Schmettau's troops, deployed on a narrow front, were caught between the cross-fire of Gudin's and Friant's divisions, Wartensleben hurled his troops upon the only regiment of Gudin's division which was deployed to the south of Hassenhausen. Attacked in front by a battalion and in flank by several squadrons, this regiment suddenly lost heart and fled. The fugitives did not even stop in Hassenhausen, but when beyond the village in the immediate neighbourhood of the other regiments, they were rallied and formed squares.

The Prussian cavalry became disordered in the pursuit, and the infantry, fearing a like fate, halted, re-formed, and did not occupy the village.

Davout did not waste a moment; two second-

114 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

line regiments of Gudin's division were sent at once to oppose Wartensleben and one of them occupied Hassenhausen.

Only one battalion remained available, and Morand's division was still a league from the battlefield.

Fortunately, although the Prussian right bore down the French left, it was but slowly and by means of a frontal attack which might be prolonged for nearly an hour. In addition the Prussians, regretting their neglect of Hassenhausen, sought to take it by main force: four battalions were crowded in front of the village and suffered heavily, only to gain possession of a few of the houses. These four battalions were lost to the Prussian right, where the attack might have been decisive.

The fusillade continued along the whole line with murderous effect for nearly an hour: Brunswick was mortally, Schmettau seriously wounded, and on the Prussian side the control of the battle was more or less gone.

A mass of cavalry comprising thirty squadrons began to assemble on the right, but had barely room to manœuvre and was not used in time.

The longer this fire duel continued, the more the Prussians were at a disadvantage, as their close line formation rendered them needlessly vulnerable.

XIII. MORAND'S ARRIVAL

The intervention of Morand's division on the French side, and that of Orange's division on the Prussian, soon upset the balance of the battle.

These fresh troops came up about 11 a.m., and the

manner in which they were utilised on each side decided the issue of the struggle. Orange's division received orders from the King of Prussia to reinforce both wings at the same time, and the Prince therefore directed one brigade to the right where Wartensleben had the advantage, and the other to the left where Schmiettau was taken in flank by Friant. These two brigades, being ordered to "support" the troops engaged, proceeded behind the actual firing line.

If, on the other hand, Orange's whole division had been thrown beyond either of the wings and directed either towards Spielberg in order to take Friant in flank, or to the right of Wartensleben so as to crush Gudin's left by an outflanking movement, success would have been rapidly assured.

Morand's division, which came up about the same time as did that of the Prince of Orange, was ordered not to support Gudin, but to prolong his left. Schmiettau appeared to be outflanking Hassenhausen from the north, but was taken in flank by the whole of Friant's division. Morand prolonged Gudin's line and rested his left, with which he intended to strike, on the Saale.

Thus on both wings Davout held the enemy at a disadvantage by means of converging fire and overlapping attacks.

The thirty squadrons assembled on the Prussian right charged Morand's battalions, but their attacks failed for want of artillery; when at last it came up the cavalry was too exhausted to continue the struggle. The lack of command was making itself felt grievously.

Morand's battalions, triumphantly resisting all

attacks, advanced on the *Prussian right*, which they overwhelmed with their fire. Wartensleben's troops, shaken by the assault, attacked with less vigour, then halted, and at length began to draw back, wheeling as they did so to face their new adversary. Then, recovering all their vigour, they counter-attacked repeatedly. The brigade of Orange's division, which had advanced to their support, attempted a vigorous attack to the south of Hassenhausen, but, surprised by bursts of artillery fire, its impulse was checked and it was quickly forced back upon Wartensleben's alignment.

From this moment victory was assured, and nothing could tear it from Davout's grasp. His three divisions, drawn up in the form of a crescent, surrounded the Prussian army and concentrated their fire on the basin of the Liss Bach. Gradually tightening their hold, they were to push back the mass of the enemy towards the bottle-neck at Auerstedt.

It was true that Davout had only one battalion available and that the Prussians on the contrary had still a numerous reserve, but this could only act from the centre outwards and would be impeded in every direction by beaten troops. Besides, it suffered from the lack of command which lost the whole Prussian army on this day: it attacked in detail, without a general disposition and without unity of action.

Nearly the whole of the cavalry of the reserve had already been used. Fourteen battalions, three batteries, and five squadrons remained, however, and the King of Prussia, by throwing this force on Friant's right flank by way of Lissdorf, could at least check the French offensive, even if he failed to regain the

victory. But from thinking that only a detachment lay before him, the King now imagined himself attacked by Napoleon's whole army. Discouraged, therefore, he merely stationed two battalions at the Poppel defile and the rest of the reserve on the Finne ridge between Eckartsberga and Auerstedt to support his retreating divisions.

These offered a heroic resistance as they fell back : " We were within pistol shot, canister tore gaps in the ranks, which were at once closed up again. Every movement of the 61st was marked by its brave soldiers left lying on the ground," wrote Davout in his *Journal*. The Prussian artillery, acting with energy, inflicted cruel losses on the French, and certain regiments attempted to counter-attack, but after 12.30 p.m. the advance of Morand's division was continuous.

To the north, Friant had widely outflanked Schmettau's division, and was already at grips with the Prussians defending Poppel.

Schmettau's troops were unable to endure the noise of this combat behind their front, and disbanding, precipitated themselves in disorder upon Poppel. Prince Henry of Prussia's brigade, alone still capable of fighting, retook this village from Friant's leading troops so as to open a passage for the fugitives. Friant succeeded nevertheless in taking 1,000 prisoners at this point.

Morand was held between the Ilm and the Liss Bach by the light troops of Blücher's old corps.

He was unable to push them back, but though his infantry was rendered immovable, he thrust forward all his artillery to the extremity of the spur, on to the

118 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

Sonnenkuppe, and opening fire on the flank and rear of Wartensleben's troops, hastened their retreat.

XIV. THE PRUSSIAN RETREAT

Towards 2 p.m. the Prussian army was in full flight; Blücher strove in vain to charge with the cavalry, but could only find one regiment.

It was 3 p.m. when Davout, after restoring order among his troops, proceeded to attack the Prussian reserve. He adopted the same tactics as in the first attack: Friant was to outflank the Prussian left, Gudin was to attack their front, while Morand was to push on towards Auerstedt so as to outflank the enemy's right.

The King of Prussia now ordered the troops who had stopped Morand's advance near the Ilm to fall back on Auerstedt. They retired step by step in good order, disengaging themselves on several occasions by energetic counter-attacks. Soon, however, Morand's division prepared to surround, from the south and east, the village of Auerstedt, now crowded with Prussians. The Prussians set fire to the village so as to delay the pursuit.

On the opposite wing Friant, extending his right as far as the woods in order to take the defenders of Eckartsberga in the rear, had entered the town.

The Prussians who still held the ridge between Eckartsberga and Auerstedt were now threatened on both flanks and beat a retreat.

Davout's troops surmounted the ridge and halted. It was 4.30 p.m. The marshal continued the pursuit with his three regiments of cavalry, soon to be sup-

ported by the battalion which had guarded the bridge at Kösen. The exhausted infantry prepared to bivouac.

The cavalry was ordered to keep on pushing back the Prussians southward in the direction of Weimar.

Davout captured 3,000 prisoners and 115 guns. The Prussian losses must have amounted to about 10,000, those of the French to 6,000, nearly a quarter of their effectives.

Bernadotte, after debouching from Dornburg during the morning, remained inactive midway between the battles of Jena and Auerstedt. He reached Apolda in the evening without having exchanged a shot with the enemy.

XV. THE PURSUIT

During the evening of October 14 the two streams of fugitives, coming from Jena and Auerstedt respectively, came into collision to the north of Weimar. Throughout the 15th the chaos was unspeakable, and it was only on the 16th that the King of Prussia was able to direct the more or less reorganised columns on Magdeburg.

But the pursuit had already begun. Murat entered Erfurt on the 16th, taking 14,000 prisoners. Blücher was surrounded by Klein and Lassalle, but, on giving his word of honour that an armistice had been concluded, was allowed to escape.

Napoleon threw his army corps fanwise along all the roads so as to track the enemy. Davout crossed the Elbe at Wittenberg on October 20; on his left was Lannes, then Bernadotte, finally Soult, who was

nearing Magdeburg. Augereau and Ney followed in second line.

Davout entered Berlin on the 25th, and Soult, leaving Ney to besiege Magdeburg, pressed forward. The other corps were aligned between them, and the *battue* continued. It ended after twenty-four days of uninterrupted pursuit, by the capitulation of Prenzlau (October 28) and of Lübeck (November 7). The Prussian armies which had fought at Jena and Auerstedt had been destroyed.

At Jena, a decisive battle if ever there was one, Prussia was annihilated. But for Napoleon's political errors after 1808, France would never have seen her hereditary enemy revive. But Prussia by her resurrection has given us a lesson which we have not learnt. Only seven years elapsed between Jena and Leipzig, and only nine between Jena and Waterloo.

It is about the interval between Sedan and the Universal Exhibition of 1878.

WATERLOO ¹

(1815)

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE allies raised an army of more than 850,000 men for the campaign of 1815 ; but all these troops were not ready at the same time. The first in the field were the Anglo-Hanoverians and the Prussians, who had 75,000 men between the lower Rhine and Flanders from March onwards. A month later the Anglo-Hanoverian army consisted of 106,000 men quartered between Brussels and the sea, whilst the Prussian force amounted to 124,000 men stationed along the Sambre and the Meuse from Charleroi to Liège. When May set in, Blücher wished to invade France with this army of 230,000 men, but the allies decided to wait a month longer, because the German and Austrian contingents would not be ready to cross the Rhine before the middle of June and the Russians not until the middle or end of July.

By June 1 Napoleon had succeeded in organising an army of 290,000 men, but he employed half of this force on the secondary frontiers and only destined 124,000 men and 370 guns for the principal operations against Wellington and Blücher.

He decided to attack them before their allies were near enough to intervene. All the available troops in northern France from Lille to Metz were assembled

¹ See maps facing pages 126 and 142.

to the south of Charleroi by forced marches, and the French army crossed the Sambre at Charleroi and in the neighbourhood on June 15, whilst the allied forces were still dispersed in their cantonments from Ghent to Liège. Unfortunately traitors such as Bourmont gave warning of the French approach, and Napoleon, during the 16th, found the greater part of the Prussian army already concentrated at Ligny before he could thrust himself between it and the English. He attacked forthwith.

The battle, begun between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m., would have been decisive had Napoleon succeeded in bringing up Drouet d'Erlon's corps, which was intended to fall upon the right flank of the Prussians and to throw them back towards the Sambre. But d'Erlon, receiving contrary orders one after the other from Napoleon and Ney, oscillated between the two armies. Finally Napoleon, to put an end to the struggle, ordered a murderous assault on the village of Ligny between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. The Prussians lost 12,000 men, the French 8,500. During the night the Prussian army retired slowly and re-formed behind Sombreffe and Brye.

Ney encountered a part of the English and Dutch-Belgian forces the same day at Quatre-Bras.

The Prussians retreated on the 17th, not towards Namur, but northwards to Wavre so as to draw near to Wellington. They bivouacked round Wavre the same evening, half their troops on the left bank of the Dyle only some seven miles from the English whom Wellington was assembling between Waterloo and Mont-Saint-Jean. The junction of the two armies was thus virtually accomplished; Napoleon

could no longer prevent it; he could only retort by concentrating the whole of his forces. From this moment, then, it was certain that his enterprise had failed, because he could only succeed by defeating the allies one after the other.

But news of this decisive event did not reach the French camp until the following day. Napoleon dispatched Grouchy towards Gembloux in pursuit of the Prussians. The Marshal, badly informed by Exelmans and Pajol, and showing as little activity as possible himself, did not advance beyond Gembloux, and did not know of the Prussian retreat on Wavre till the night of the 17th-18th. Even then he was convinced that the news concerned only a part of their force; in any case he failed to grasp that the presence of the whole or part of the Prussian army at Wavre necessitated his moving without delay in a direction midway between those of Wavre and Mont-Saint-Jean. Yet he knew since he had left Ligny that the Emperor was marching against the English, thinking to encounter them on the edge of the wood of Soignies on the way to Mont-Saint-Jean, and he had orders to find out whether the allies were attempting to join forces.

Grouchy only set out at 8 a.m. on the 18th and then in the direction of Wavre. He arrived before this town about 4 p.m. The guns had been heard on his left since midday.

The English, learning during the morning of the 17th of the Prussian defeat at Ligny, immediately fell back on Mont-Saint-Jean so as to be on a level with their allies and to avoid the danger of being overwhelmed by the French. At the same time

Wellington and Blücher came to an understanding : Wellington was prepared to give battle at Mont-Saint-Jean with the help of one Prussian corps ; Blücher promised to intervene with his whole army.

Napoleon, leading his cavalry in person, pressed the English rear-guard as hard as he could, but at La Belle Alliance, perceiving the entire Anglo-Hanoverian and Dutch forces drawn up in battle array before him, he halted.

At nightfall he ordered d'Erlon's corps and the cavalry to bivouac behind La Belle Alliance on either side of the road. The rest of the army was about four miles away at Genappe.

II. THE TROOPS

The troops about to encounter each other on the battlefield of La Belle Alliance were of very unequal value.

The majority of the French troops were old soldiers who had remained with the colours or had been recalled to them. The 1815 class had already been called up for the campaign of 1814, thus only a very few of the troops had not been under fire. The officers and non-commissioned officers were thoroughly trustworthy, and the dissensions which had shown themselves in the garrisons did not affect the conduct of the soldiers in action. The Emperor had not led such experienced troops to battle since the days of Austerlitz and Jena.

The French generals, on the other hand, left much to be desired. Napoleon had no longer at his side the group of Marshals who had seconded him in 1805

and 1806 ; Lannes was dead, Murat far away in Italy ; the Emperor had seen fit to give Davout and Soult administrative work, and Suchet held the chief command in a minor theatre of war. The fate of the campaign would have been different had these three great soldiers held command in the principal army instead of Ney, Grouchy, and d'Erlon. Only one of all the Marshals of the Grand Army was to take part in the operations, and that one was Ney ! From Gosselies to Mont-Saint-Jean Ney was to show the same lack of comprehension of the general situation, the same imperfect and tardy execution of orders received, and the same untimely ardour and unskilful choice of tactical formations in action which had been so often apparent from 1805 to 1807, before Ulm, before and during Jena, and during the campaigns of Eylau and Friedland.

Napoleon's forces in the Low Countries comprised five army corps, those of d'Erlon, Reille, Vandamme, Gérard, and Lobau. The cavalry under the supreme command of Grouchy consisted of four corps of two divisions each, commanded by Pajol, Exelmans, Kellermann, and Milhaud. Lastly, the Imperial Guard was divided into the Old Guard (grenadiers and chasseurs), the Young Guard (light infantry and skirmishers), light and reserve cavalry. The Old Guard was commanded by Generals Friant, Roquet, Morand, and Michel, the Young Guard by Duhesme and Barrois, the light cavalry by Lefebvre-Desnouettes, and the reserve cavalry by Guyot.

Grouchy's command on June 18 consisted of Gérard's and Vandamme's corps and Pajol's and Exelman's cavalry, in all about 33,000 men.

Napoleon had available the Imperial Guard, d'Erlon's, Reille's, and Lobau's ¹ corps, and Kellermann's and Milhaud's cavalry, a total of about 74,000 troops with 266 guns.

Wellington's army was slightly inferior in numbers, and comprised on the most probable estimate 50,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry, and about 6,000 artillerymen and engineers with 184 guns.

These troops were far from being homogeneous. They consisted of rather more than 24,000 English, 6,000 of the King's German Legion, 11,000 Hanoverians, 6,000 Brunswickers, 3,000 of the Nassau division, and 18,000 Dutch-Belgians; this latter contingent was again subdivided into 14,000 Dutch and 4,000 Belgians.

The Belgian troops were not very cordially disposed towards the coalition; two-thirds of the Dutch contingent consisted of veterans, one-third of recruits. The German Legion had fought under Wellington in the Peninsular Wars, and although it contained a certain proportion of recruits, the troops were disciplined and experienced. Two-thirds of the Hanoverians were furnished by the Landwehr; they were newly levied troops, and a few non-commissioned officers of the German Legion had been drafted to them so as to give them cohesion. The Brunswick and Nassau contingents consisted half of recruits, half of troops who had served in the French armies. As to the English infantry, it was composed, not of the seasoned troops who had fought in Spain for five

¹ One of Reille's divisions was left at Ligny and one of Lobau's was with Pajol. In exchange, Napoleon appropriated two of Grouchy's cavalry divisions.

years, but chiefly of second battalions, hitherto dépôt battalions, brought up to war strength by means of recruits which they had trained.

Wellington divided his troops into army corps of three or four divisions each; he had besides a cavalry reserve under Lord Uxbridge. The general officers were excellent; Hill, Acton, and Picton had distinguished themselves, if not in large operations, at least on the battlefield.

The majority of the Prussian soldiers had been seasoned by the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, but half of them consisted of Landwehr troops and the battalions had been brought up to strength by means of recruits. These troops, very efficiently officered, equalled those commanded by Napoleon in 1807 and 1809 which he had led to victory at Eylau, Friedland, Abensberg, Eckmühl, and Wagram. The commander-in-chief Blücher, his chief and deputy-chief of staff Gneisenau and Grolman, were men of high merit; the four army corps commanders, Bülow, Pirch, Ziethen, and Thielmann, were good soldiers without remarkable qualities.

III. THE BATTLEFIELD OF WATERLOO

The battlefield of Waterloo is situated in a slightly undulating country; at its highest elevation it is 460 ft., at its lowest 360 ft. above sea level.

The main lines marking the dominant features of the ground over the greater part of its extent are parallel to the principal geographical line of the Belgian region—that of the line of the Sambre and the Meuse from Mauberge to Liège and that of the crest

followed by the Roman road and the modern high-road from Bavai to Liège, from west-south-west to east-north-east. The Ohain and Plancenoi streams, carrying their waters to the Dyle, flow also in this direction.

Wellington's troops were posted along the ridge which bounds the valley of the Ohain stream to the north.

The Anglo-Dutch reserves on the reverse slope of this ridge were hidden by it from the view of the French.

The French did not take up a position on the pronounced ridge which separates the two streams just named, but placed themselves nearer the allies, 1,100 yards from their line, on a secondary ridge which, descending from the inn called La Belle Alliance towards the village of Frischermont, separates the two little valleys which converge towards the source of the Ohain stream.

All these little valleys spring from a plateau about 500 yards wide which stretches from La Belle Alliance towards the north-west, leaving the main Brussels—Charleroi road a little to the east.

To the west of this plateau, the crest lines and valleys run from south to north. A fairly deep dingle has its origin in the great park of Hougoumont, and descending northward towards Merbraine, is bounded on the west by a clearly defined ridge which limits the battlefield on that side.

The sunken road bordered by thick hedges, which runs from Ohain to Braine-l'Alleud along the ridge occupied by the English, formed a natural entrenchment. It was here that Wellington stationed on the

left and in the centre the greater part of his Hanoverian, Dutch, and German infantry; on the right, where he expected the heaviest attack, he placed half his English troops. He massed his reserves behind his centre and right, and only strengthened his left with two cavalry brigades.

The manner in which this position was occupied deserves the closest attention. It was quite different from all that European generals had done for a whole century. Wellington disposed the elements of his army so as to make the very most of their fire, and for this purpose often went into the greatest detail. The troops employed at each point were exactly apportioned according to the effect to be produced—so as to protect them from enfilade and to obtain cross fire wherever possible.

The batteries were posted just sufficiently forward in the first line to be able to see, but were concealed as much as possible; the guns were mounted behind the slopes and hedges and embrasures made. The infantry was stationed some distance behind the crest, sheltered from the French fire, and was not to come up to the hollow road until required. A continuous chain of skirmishers was posted some 200 or 300 yards in advance; that is to say, at about the foot of the slopes.

The most interesting point of this organisation was the occupation of various localities situated less than a cannon shot in front of the line. These localities differed in character.

In front of the allied left the Ohain stream flowed amidst orchards, farms, and the hamlets of Papelotte, La Haye, and Smohain. Wellington occupied the

130 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

whole of this block, on a front of about 1,300 yards with Saxe-Weimar's (Nassau) brigade. One company was stationed in advance in the château of Frischermont, while small detachments occupied the various buildings of Papelotte, La Haye, and Smohain and, surrounded by woods and orchards, were out of sight of the French gunners. Two guns posted in the rear flanked the inner edge and commanded the outlets. The rest of the brigade remained massed in order to manoeuvre and charge. This group of localities and woods, then, was occupied by a minimum of troops so as to obstruct and delay any attempt to turn the Anglo-Dutch left.

Only one farm stood opposite the allied front; it was small and had no large enclosures, but its walls were thick and solid. This farm, called La Haye Sainte, was situated about 200 yards in advance of the allied lines at the side of the Brussels-Charleroi high-road. It was loopholed and occupied by 400 of the German Legion, the best troops Wellington had at his disposal.

Immediately behind La Haye Sainte, and on the opposite side of the road, was a sand pit. This was also occupied so as to ensure a flanking fire on two sides of the farm. Two batteries posted in the rear close to the main road and along the Ohain road commanded all the approaches to La Haye Sainte.

Whilst La Haye Sainte only consisted of a building about 40 yards square, the château and park of Hougoumont covered an area nearly 550 yards square. The château and the farm buildings were situated in the north-west angle; a garden nearly 220 yards long by 130 yards wide enclosed by walls

on the south and east lay to the east of the château. This garden was surrounded by an orchard extending about 220 yards farther eastward, which was bounded by a thick hedge and a ditch. To the south lay an easily traversed little wood, surrounded by a hedge which hid the walls of the château and the garden from the sight of the French gunners. Several batteries posted about 330 yards in rear commanded the outlets from the orchard, but had no effect beyond the wood.

The assailant, to carry this block, had to penetrate the wood, which was under fire from the edge of the orchard. If he succeeded, he had to attack the château and farm buildings, which were commanded by the northern fringe of the orchard on the one hand and on the other by the sunken road which led to the farm. Wellington occupied Hougoumont with about two battalions (seven companies of the Guards, one company of Hanoverians, and one battalion of the Nassau contingent).

Thus Wellington calculated all his dispositions so as to produce the most effective fire and to shelter his troops from the French artillery, but, with the exception of ordering embrasures to be contrived for his guns and loopholes for his infantry, he permitted no defensive works. He did not wish to tie himself to the ground, least of all to fix his troops there. He occupied a narrow front, less than 4,400 yards for 68,000 men, and kept a great part of his force in second line to use at his own discretion. He was evidently determined not to content himself with a passive defence, but to be free to manœuvre and attack as occasion demanded.

132 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

IV. THE ATTACK ON HOUGOUMONT

Napoleon's dispositions were extremely simple : d'Erlon's corps was deployed on the right of the road, Reille's on the left ; Milhaud's cavalry and the light Guard cavalry were stationed behind d'Erlon, whilst behind Reille lay Kellermann's cavalry corps and the reserve Guard cavalry.

Behind the centre were Lobau's corps, the two cavalry divisions detached from Grouchy and the Guard infantry. Only a small proportion of the artillery was in the front line, nearly the whole of it remained available with the cavalry and the reserves.

This symmetrical disposition of the French troops at once showed the Emperor's intention to attack the centre. Instead of extending his army so as to overlap a wing of the enemy, he concentrated it in a space of about 3,800 yards which gave him a density of eighteen men to the yard, triple that which he had had at Austerlitz, Jena, and Eckmühl. Briefly Napoleon intended to bear down the intelligence of his adversary by sheer weight of men.

He ordered Reille to attack Hougomont, so as to draw the enemy's attention to that quarter, and then to deliver the main attack on the right of the Brussels high-road.

The battle began there at 11.30 a.m. by an assault on Hougomont.

The French artillery with a few guns strove to prepare the attack on the farm, but without success. The buildings were masked by the woods and avenues.

Jérôme Bonaparte's was the division first ordered to attack by Reille. His leading regiment obtained

a footing in the wood fairly rapidly and he had only to leave it in contact with the enemy to carry out Napoleon's orders. But no other duty had been assigned to Jérôme and he persisted in the assault ; a second regiment was ordered to engage behind the first, and in an hour's time the French had reached the walls of the garden and the château, but the dead lay heaped at the foot of the walls and before the gates. Notwithstanding Reille's repeated orders, a second brigade was brought up, with no better success. When Wellington saw the mass of men crushed by artillery and musketry fire, he had only to hurl four companies on the struggling French troops to drive them back nearly 500 yards from the farm.

V. NEY'S GREAT ATTACK

Between 12.30 and 1 p.m. Napoleon ordered the attack on the centre. But on this occasion he began the battle as on other occasions he had finished it : before the first musket shot was fired a battery of eighty guns, closely massed, was posted in front and on the right of La Belle Alliance.

About the same time the head of a Prussian column was seen debouching from the village of La Chapelle-Saint-Lambert, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from La Belle Alliance. Napoleon had thus only two hours in which to beat the English before the arrival of the Prussians. This fact, ascertained at the very moment when the attack was about to begin, was probably the cause of all the mistakes committed during the battle, of the heedless use of brute force to the exclusion of all manœuvring.

The Emperor ordered Ney to conduct the attack. The big battery ceased fire towards 2 p.m. so as to allow d'Erlon's infantry to pass by. These 20,000 men marched to the assault in massed formation as if mere accumulation of cannon fodder could inflict heavier losses on the enemy and hasten the victory. Napoleon, forgetful of Friedland, had not specified the formation of this attacking force. Ney and d'Erlon, left to themselves, adopted the most unwieldy of all, a formation which had not once been used since 1794 and the choice of which, after twenty campaigns, Napoleon could not even have suspected. In each division the eight battalions were deployed in line one behind the other, the distance of a section apart, forming a compact mass of men counting 160 from right to left and 24 from front to rear. It was impossible to split up, deploy, or manœuvre such a mass as this. The four divisions marched in echelon at intervals of about 440 yards, the left leading.

It has been frequently suggested that this formation was adopted in error, d'Erlon having given orders to form battalions in columns by division, and the word "division" signifying either a division of an army or a group of two platoons. But no student of the battles of the First Empire can regard this supposition as correct: columns by division were regularly employed—that is to say, columns composed of the three divisions of a battalion one behind the other—but until then the battalions of a division had never been deployed one behind the other. It is absolutely certain that the four divisions of d'Erlon's corps did not adopt this curious formation without explicit

The attack was delivered along the whole line. The German troops did not offer any great resistance to our right, which took possession of Papelotte, climbed the height, and scattered the first Hanoverian line.

The two divisions of the centre obtained the same result: they dislodged the Dutch, who formed Wellington's first line at this point, without difficulty, and threw them back towards Mont-Saint-Jean, whence they did not return.

The two brigades forming the division on the left had been separated. One of them took part in the general movement and drove the enemy out of the sand pit; the other surrounded La Haye Sainte, but could not make its way in.

Wellington then brought his second line into action: he hurled Picton's English division against the two and a half divisions of the French centre which had crossed the hollow road. Picton drove them back, thanks to his wider front which enabled him to overwhelm them with a well-aimed fire. The French endeavoured to deploy, but their massed formation did not allow of this manœuvre, and, suffering enormous losses, they were forced to retreat.

Wellington was at first less fortunate in the direction of La Haye Sainte. He had engaged the French troops, who surrounded the farm, with an inferior German battalion composed of recruits. The French easily repulsed the attack, and as the Germans retreated they were charged by a cuirassier brigade which Napoleon had taken the precaution of sending to this point.

At this moment Lord Uxbridge hurled the English

guards and dragoons under Somerset and Ponsonby against the French line. The former threw back Napoleon's cuirassiers just as they had crossed the hollow road, while the dragoons charged the massed French infantry, which, seeking in vain to deploy, withdrew in confusion.

The English cavalry, disordered in its turn by the charge, pushed forward to the line of the French batteries, but was there charged and thrown back by a lancer brigade and a cuirassier brigade which debouched from the French right wing.

The great French infantry attack failed on the whole, because of the impracticable formation adopted. In a short time d'Erlon's corps lost a third of its effectives, including 2,000 prisoners and two eagles. Twenty guns were lost or put out of action.

VI. THE CAVALRY ATTACK

After this first attack both sides paused to recover breath, and the fighting only continued in the Hougoumont park, where, following Jérôme's whole division, a brigade of Foy's division was engaged. The English had been reinforced by two fresh battalions, and Reille ordered the farm to be bombarded with howitzers. The buildings took fire, but the English still held firm.

About 3.30 p.m. the Emperor resumed the attack on La Haye Sainte, which he doubtless wished to occupy before renewing the assault on the English lines. The big battery was re-formed to the left of La Belle Alliance and the cannonade redoubled. The farm was set on fire.

Wellington on his part reinforced his line by filling

up the gaps with the Brunswick battalion and advanced three brigades of English Guards, till then held in reserve.

Marshal Ney, thinking to detect in these movements in the English line signs of a retreat, resolved to order his cavalry to charge. He deployed Milhaud's cavalry corps and Lefebvre-Desnouettes' light division, not in the little valley which separated d'Erlon from the English line, but on the plateau which stretches to the west of the road. The mass of cavalry thus deployed masked the French batteries and forced them to cease fire.

While the cavalry proceeded forward at a trot between La Haye Sainte and Hougomont, the English infantry formed squares, to the number of sixteen, and the English batteries fired round shot, then canister to the last minute until the French squadrons crossing the hollow road charged the squares. A terrible struggle ensued; Napoleon's cuirassiers charged eight times without any very appreciable results, although they succeeded in carrying off three standards.

They in their turn were charged by the English cavalry and thrown back to the foot of the slopes; but they renewed the attack, and Ney, instead of directing the fight as a whole, put himself at the head of the squadrons and charged with them.

Thus it came about that the French infantry received no orders to support the cavalry and reap the advantages of the desperate charges. One brigade of d'Erlon's corps was still engaged at La Haye Sainte, but the rest remained inactive, watching the frightful struggle on the plateau from afar.

The two assaults of our cavalry, although they had only succeeded in breaking one or two of the English squares, had nevertheless exhausted the enemy. Wellington, seeing the men to be at the end of their strength, merely urged them to hold fast, promising that if they did so until the arrival of the Prussians the battle would be won.

If they gave way before then, all would be lost. It was a serious and a decisive moment, and like his enemy, Napoleon felt the gravity of the situation. While regretting the premature recourse to cavalry against a still intact infantry, he had perforce to cling to the only remaining chance of success and, by supporting Ney's cavalry as quickly as possible, endeavour to carry off the victory by sheer fighting. The infantry could not have arrived in time, and the Emperor hurled forward Kellermann's corps and the reserve Guard cavalry. Ney thus reinforced renewed his attacks a third and then a fourth time, but at last had to give way; the English infantry had held firm. The English cavalry made as if to pursue, but were too exhausted to go far beyond the slopes of the plateau.

Ney, remembering only then the infantry available at La Belle Alliance, sent hurriedly in search of them. But he led them to useless death, for they were only 6,000 strong, assuredly too small a number to break through the English line. In a few minutes 1,500 men were killed or wounded and the menace of a counter-attack by fresh Anglo-Hanoverian troops drove back the rest.

Ney succeeded, however, with a few battalions, in capturing La Haye Sainte, set on fire by our howitzers

and defended at the last by barely forty men. These retired in good order on the English line about 6 p.m.

Events proved at once the importance of the capture of this *point d'appui*, insisted upon two hours before by Napoleon and neglected by Ney for untimely cavalry charges. The Marshal was hardly in possession of the building before he was able to mount a battery close to it and to bombard the English lines at about 330 yards' range, while his skirmishers established themselves at about 90 yards from the enemy.

The debris of d'Erlon's corps between La Belle Alliance and La Haye Sainte advanced to the hollow road, and driving back the German legion established themselves firmly in the heart of the English position. Thus Wellington for a second time felt defeat to be imminent.

Ney for his part satisfied that victory lay within his grasp begged the Emperor to send reinforcements. "Troops!" cried Napoleon; "where can I find any? do you expect me to make them?"

He had nevertheless the fourteen battalions of the Old Guard which he decided later to use against the English; and it is probable that had he dispatched them to Ney when the latter urgently requested reinforcements, the English would have been driven back. But in that case the Prussians must have gained a footing on the Brussels high-road.

Lobau's corps and the Young Guard had been fighting the Prussians for the last two hours, and the Old Guard was to support them.

Reille's corps had failed to take Liougoumont, and little by little had been nearly used up in the struggle.

The right of d'Erlon's corps had resumed the contest in Papelotte and La Haye so as to prevent the junction of the allied armies.

VII. THE ENGAGEMENT OF THE PRUSSIANS

A study of the position of the Prussian bivouacs on the night of the 17th 18th makes it difficult to understand why Blücher's troops only appeared on the battlefield of La Belle Alliance at 4 p.m.

It is exactly $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Wavre to La Belle Alliance, though by cross roads it is true. Two of the Prussian corps stationed to the west of Wavre had each a separate road by which to march, and allowing for an average of only $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles an hour should certainly have reached the Brussels high-road by 2 p.m. But the Prussian command, instead of striving to gain time, wished above all else to engage its fresh troops, and these lay $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles to the east of Wavre (Bülow's corps). For this reason the first Prussian troops did not appear at Chapelle-Saint-Lambert until 1 p.m. and opposite Plancenoit until 4 p.m.

Napoleon, long since warned that he had to deal only with Bülow's corps, allowed him to reach the battlefield so that the French reserves might be employed alternately against the English and the Prussians.

Blücher arrived opposite Plancenoit with the advance-guard of Bülow's corps at 4 p.m. He wished to await the main body of this corps before taking the offensive, but yielding to Wellington's entreaty he resolved to attack about 4.30 p.m.

Lobau's 10,000 men repulsed the attack, but in their turn were driven back by Bülow's 30,000. They retreated slowly, however, and it was 6 p.m. before the Prussians could attack Plancenoit.

Once the enemy should take Plancenoit the French position would be untenable. Napoleon therefore hurled the Young Guard on the village and rolled back the Prussians beyond it, but the French were very soon forced to give way in their turn.

It was precisely at this moment that Ney, thinking he was about to dislodge the English, begged for reinforcements. Napoleon could not send him the Old Guard until the Prussians were driven out of Plancenoit.

Two battalions of the Old Guard advanced, each, in column, entered the village without firing a shot, and, sweeping out the Prussians, in twenty minutes threw them back 600 yards. The Young Guard following this movement retook the ground it had previously lost.

This counter-stroke of the Old Guard stopped the Prussian advance and Napoleon was able to turn his attention to the English, who had been dislodged from their original position at all points; our skirmishers had everywhere crossed the Braine-l'Alleud--Ohain road.

Napoleon still had fourteen battalions of the Old Guard, of which nine were in general reserve behind Plancenoit; he ordered d'Erlon to reinforce Ney with these nine battalions and to break the English centre.¹

It was after 7 p.m. Wellington during the preceding half-hour had reorganised his troops and

¹ See note on p. 284.

resumed the offensive, and just as the Old Guard was set in motion, our infantry was thrown back all along the slopes of the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean. Wellington had called up the Dutch-Belgian division, which until then had occupied Braine-l'Alleud, and was shortly able to engage it.

He learnt, moreover, of the near approach of Ziethen's Prussian corps and felt victory assured. The head of Ziethen's column drew towards La Haye and Frisчерmont, and the right of d'Erlon's corps faced it with difficulty.

Napoleon, perceiving Ziethen's corps debouch from La Haye, did not yet despair of victory and merely hastened the Old Guard's attack. He first hurried to the right of d'Erlon's corps, harangued the soldiers, and gave the order to attack. Then he returned to the Guard.

Of the nine battalions under d'Erlon's command, two remained opposite the park of Hougoumont whilst seven marched on the enemy.

Throughout their advance these battalions were exposed to the most intense artillery fire, to which they were unable to reply. To their left the English and Dutch batteries had pushed forward near Hougoumont and took them in flank. Each shot tore a gap in the ranks, but they closed up again immediately.

When the leading battalions reached the ridge they began by throwing back some of the enemy's battalions, but the battalions of the centre, surprised by a volley at close range from the English guards, gave way. Wellington at once ordered his English infantry to charge, while the Dutch-Belgian division

fell upon the flank of those columns which had gained a footing on the plateau, and an English brigade debouched from the orchard of Hougomont and took the French in rear.

The English charged on all sides, and the Imperial Guard, having already lost half its effectives, was scattered and hurled in disorder to the bottom of the little valley. It carried with it all that remained of d'Erlon's corps. The division opposing Ziethen lost ground and the Prussians advanced. Three of the squares of the Imperial Guard alone retired in good order. Soon Lobau's troops round Plancenoit were overwhelmed by a whole Prussian corps, but the battalions of the Guard defending the village held firm. At length the French and Prussians emerged pell-mell on to the Brussels road near the remaining two squares of the Old Guard, with which Napoleon slowly quitted his last battlefield.

GRAVELOTTE ¹

(1870)

I. THE WEAPONS

THE weapons with which the war of 1870 was fought differed very much from those which had been used by the armies of the First Empire.

The musket had been entirely changed, thanks to the use of the percussion cap, to breech-loading, and to rifling.

Breech-loading made it possible for the soldier to load his weapon in any position, and he was not long in taking advantage of it : ever since the first battles fought with the new arms skirmishers have lain down or taken cover to fire. The slightest cover, even a furrow, became almost as valuable as an entrenchment. The rapidity of fire had increased enormously, as it was only necessary to put a cartridge into the breech instead of first slipping it into the barrel, then ramming it down, priming the touch-hole, replacing the ramrod, etc. The power and accuracy of the weapon were scarcely to be compared with what they had been in 1815.

Dreyse's needle-gun fired effectively upon infantry behind cover to a distance of 120 yards ; on a section of infantry up to 330 yards, and at larger masses up to 660 yards.

The chassepot was effective against small bodies

¹ See maps on page 155 and facing pages 172 and 192.

of troops to a distance of 1,300 yards ; it was extremely powerful within a distance of 550 yards, so great were the distances covered with murderous effect by the fire of well-posted infantry. In France as well as in Germany there was a decided impression that an attack upon a defensive position had become very difficult and should not be undertaken without many precautions.

The improvement of the gun had been not less than that of the musket. Its influence on the form and features of battle was to be even greater. The use of shells, that is to say of hollow projectiles instead of solid cannon-balls, was a first step in advance. As soon as shells were used, whose action consisted in bursting and not in ricocheting, advantage could be taken of the whole range of the weapon. The range of a howitzer was 2,200 yards, that of the French gun of 1858, 3,300 yards, and that of the Krupp gun even greater.

By applying breech-loading and rifling to the gun as to the musket both its power and accuracy were greatly increased. The length given to the shell increased them still more.

For breech-loading a gun has to be made of harder metal than bronze so as not to get worn by the friction of the shells in the barrel. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century Krupp succeeded in constructing his breech-loading rifled guns by inventing a method of casting steel in large masses. But the steel used by Krupp was far from perfect. Experiments gave such disappointing results that it was rejected by the French artillery. But the Prussians considered that the ballistic advantages of the gun out-

weighed the imperfections of the metal, and General Hindersin caused the retention of the Krupp *matériel* adopted in 1860.

It was not until 1868 that the French artillery discovered a form of cast steel which produced good results in experiments ; but the study of steel guns had scarcely begun in 1870, though it had gone far enough to render possible the improvised construction of Reffye's gun in the second half of the war.

Meanwhile the French had rifled guns, though they were muzzle-loaders ; they benefited both in accuracy and power from the advantages of rifling and of long shells, but they had not the extreme accuracy produced by an expansive ring.

This was the great difference in the artillery of the two armies ; for the range of the French guns was amply sufficient ; in 1859 they had fired effectively to a distance of 3,300 yards.

The difference of accuracy had a variety of consequences. The Prussians were obliged to ascertain and check the range with the greatest care, owing to the fact that their shells fell within very narrow limits of space. The French, whose shots, fired without change of elevation, spread over an area 440 yards deep from front to rear, considered it useless to determine the range and elevation with great accuracy.

In order to find the correct elevation the Prussians had to make the shell burst at the point where it touched the ground ; so they generally used a shell with a percussion fuse, which caused it to burst on impact.

As the French neglected to control the ranges exactly, they attached little importance to firing with

percussion shells ; they preferred to fire with shrapnel—that is to say, with shells which burst in the air before they reach the target, and shower their bullets upon it. In this case the explosion is regulated, as in the old bombs, by means of a fuse which burns from the moment that the shell leaves the gun and during the time necessary in order that the shell should burst close to its mark. The fuse is marked for perforation at a number of points, one of which must be pierced as a vent-hole to fix the duration of combustion at the number of seconds desired.

In 1858 these fuses had marks for perforation at every second, which about correspond to distances increasing each time by 220 yards. Given the scant accuracy of the fire, such a scale was enough to produce the explosion at as many different ranges as could be desired.

But General Leboeuf, president of the Artillery Committee, thinking that the large number of perforation marks created great difficulties for the gunners, was so senseless as to suppress them all but two.

After 1861 the fuse had only the perforation marks corresponding to 1,500 and 3,200 yards, and the fire of the French gun at the intermediate distances was quite ineffectual, except for such shells as might be fitted with the few percussion fuses contained in the ammunition wagons.

On those rare occasions when a hostile battery placed itself 1,500 or 1,600 yards away it was annihilated in a few minutes. The rest of the time our artillery fired with no effect.

The German artillery percussion fire produced no appalling results, but it produced some effect at all

ranges. It was especially effective against cavalry and infantry in close formation.

The machine guns adopted in 1870 in the French army had considerable effect when they could shoot at short distances—that is to say, less than 1,600 yards ; but it was rarely possible to take up a position as near to the enemy's infantry as that without being crushed by his artillery.

In short, our artillery was the victim of a prejudice firmly rooted in France, which put a ridiculously low limit to effective range and made all its preparations accordingly.

In 1870 they reckoned only with ranges not exceeding 1,600 yards and they nearly always had to fire at over 2,200 yards.

To these causes of inferiority the French artillery added another, not less serious : the *matériel* with which it was provided had been created by officers who had never taken part in war on a grand scale. Their only experience was that of war in Algeria and of the artillery ranges, and they tried to produce a *matériel* as light as possible, useful for crossing the Atlas or for performing evolutions at full gallop. The majority of our guns were four-pounders, whose shells broke into as many fragments as those of the twelve-pounders ; but most of them had insufficient force and produced no results. On the battlefield only the twelve-pounders were to prove of use, but there were too few of them.

II. THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

The inferiority of the French artillery, though considerable, was not irreparable. The *matériel*

could still be turned to some advantage. It was the incapacity of the French command that was fatal and irremediable.

The leaders of the German army were by no means faultless, but they had as nearly as possible reached the standard to which a body of officers as a whole can raise itself. Prussia's victory was the result of a persistent and intelligent effort, guided for half a century by him who was to reap its fruits, Prince, afterwards King, William.

The dominating quality of the old Prussian army had been inflexible discipline : and it was this discipline that its chiefs strove to maintain in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the wars of 1806 and 1815 had proved that other qualities are necessary in modern war ; even the common soldier must have intelligence, adaptability, and initiative. Scharnhorst, who was not a Prussian, had turned the attention of the officers in this direction from 1807 to 1815, and the regulations for manœuvres of 1812 marked the introduction of French tactics in the Prussian infantry. After 1815 the spirit of old Prussia regained the upper hand ; drill and iron discipline strangled all initiative ; whatever liberal and intellectual elements had been brought into the army by the wars of independence tended to disappear with the officers of *bourgeois* origin.

However, Scharnhorst's work was not altogether in vain ; two essential things remained : the drill-books conceived in the spirit of modern warfare, and the autumn manœuvres with two sides, the true school of leadership.

Prince William of Prussia had early been accus-

tomed to the strict Prussian discipline, and instinctively he was its firm partisan. It was only by a violent effort that after many long years he recognised the necessity for individual initiative in modern warfare; but once persuaded of the need for it, he devoted himself to the task of regenerating the Prussian army with the indefatigable activity of an iron will. His brother Frederick William IV ascended the throne in 1840, and practically handed over to him the royal authority over the army. From that time on the Prince travelled incessantly all over the kingdom; personally superintending the execution of the royal commands in every regiment; seeing that every one had the full share of responsibility and initiative that devolved on him; suppressing all abuses of authority, and personally superintending the progress of instruction.

The use of the needle-gun, and the adoption of absolutely modern training regulations (1847), which gave each company a large share of independence, made initiative among all ranks of the hierarchy even more necessary. When at length he became first regent and then king, Prince William completed his work by remorselessly sweeping away all officers incapable of retaining their position in an army where initiative, zeal, and activity were the order of the day.

Whilst thus developing new qualities in his army King William had not lost sight of the primitive and essential quality, to which, moreover, his instinctive preferences inclined him: strict Prussian discipline. He summed up his work in the formula: "Drill und Erziehung."

The grand manœuvres were the principal means used for developing initiative and aptitude for leadership among the officers. Frederick II had instituted them, but merely as practice in evolutions. After 1807 Scharnhorst had reorganised them, laying down the principle which was in future to inspire all measures taken for the education of leaders: every manœuvre or exercise that has the creation of leaders for its object must be between two opposing sides. The point is to pit one will against another, and to make men form decisions under the same conditions of uncertainty as those in which they find themselves in war. Manœuvres took place every year after 1815, and very soon the details of their execution were regulated by systematic instructions. In 1823 umpires were instituted; in 1829, and above all in 1840, the chief of the staff, Krauseneck, supported by Prince William, drew up complete regulations governing the manner of conducting and carrying out the great manœuvres.

The regulations of 1861, the "Green Book," definitely fixed these regulations. In manœuvres the opposition between the two sides must be real: that is to say, the director must conscientiously keep the balance between them; he must not seek to prove a theory, or to uphold a thesis, but both leaders must be perfectly free to conduct their operations, the task of evolving problems and exposing faults being left to the course of events. This demonstration by the event could be realised by means of the umpires, who would know nothing of the general plan, but each at the point assigned to him would take care that events should happen as far as possible just as

152 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

in war. Above all they were to guard against too great rapidity of action, too brisk attacks, and against underrating the effects of fire.

The schemes of the manœuvres should be so conceived as to furnish officers of all ranks with opportunities of acting on their own initiative as often as possible.

Prince William superintended the grand manœuvres himself, intervening frequently in order to insure their being well carried out, and as soon as he became regent, and then king, he gave his criticisms effectual backing by discharging officers who had failed to give satisfaction.

The weeding out of officers from 1860 onwards may be counted among the most important causes of the Prussian victories in 1866 and 1870. From 1821 on, Müffling, the Chief of the Staff, supplemented the grand manœuvres by what were called Staff Tours, two-sided manœuvres without troops carried out by the officers of the General Staff. Finally, from 1848 on, the war game, "Kriegsspiel," manœuvres between two sides on a map, began to develop.

Thus by every sort of means, with troops when possible, otherwise on the ground without troops, or merely on a map, Prussian officers were practised in the art of command. They learned to form decisions, and the daily experience of their task taught them that the boldest decision is often the wisest, that a prompt, straightforward offensive is the most effectual course, and that prudence, hesitation, and the defensive lead to defeat.

III. MOLTKE

In this way, before 1870, were formed the leaders of the Prussian army. A central organ, the great General Staff, recruited from the General School of War, which had become the War Academy, studied the art of war and prepared plans of campaign for every possible emergency. Since 1815 only five men had succeeded one another at its head, all men of great merit: Grolmann, Müßling, Krauseneck, Reyher, and lastly, since 1857, Moltke. The first plans for a war against France were drawn up in 1830 and they were always kept up to date. After Krauseneck and Reyher, Moltke continually revised them. The special mark of his work is the importance which he attached to railway lines for the movements of concentration. In this department his influence over his countrymen was considerable, and he caused the density of the network of lines and their capacity to be increased with extreme rapidity. He obtained this result, that in 1870 the German army could be mobilised and transported to the Palatinate in nineteen days, whilst in 1857 it took more than forty-five days to transport it to the Rhine.

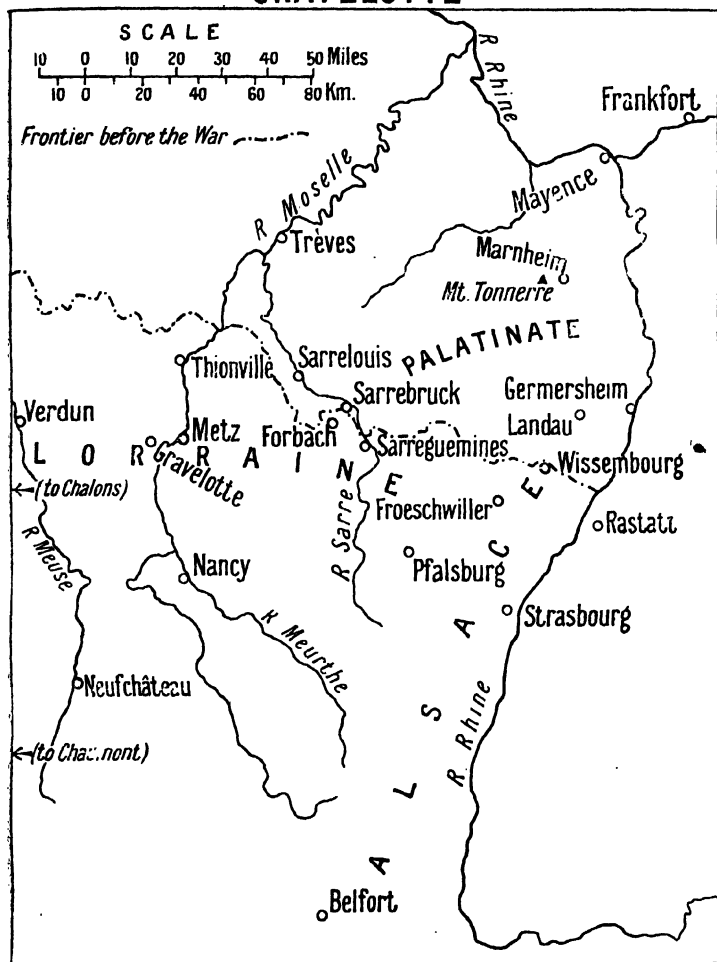
Moltke's plans were sagaciously based upon solid data, in accordance with the fundamental principles laid down by Napoleon. The war was to be carried on offensively, but only from the day on which the army, united, should be in a position to concentrate for battle as a whole. Moltke was especially anxious to avoid partial defeats, and consequently he fixed the zone of assembly for the armies so as to be certain that the enemy could not attack one or two army

corps without the others being within reach. In his first plans, from 1857 to 1860 he could not even be sure that all the Prussian corps could be detrained on the Rhine before the arrival of the French ; but in order not to abandon the strong line formed by this great river he organised a defence of several days on the Rhine, so as to gain the short time necessary for the union of the armies. In 1863 this defensive stage disappeared ; the French could not reach Mayence until the moment when the last Prussian corps were being detrained ; at last, in the later years, from 1867 to 1870 Moltke was sure of arriving at Mayence before the French, and every day increased his chances of being before them in the Palatinate.

When South Germany allied itself with Prussia, Moltke was very careful not to leave the southern contingents on the right bank of the Rhine opposite Strasbourg ; he collected all the forces of which the King of Prussia (Commander-in-Chief of the allied armies) could dispose, into a space small enough to make it possible to concentrate them on a battle-field. The assembling of the army was to take place between the French frontier, the Moselle, and the Rhine.

The principal army (Second army, Prince Frederick Charles, six or seven corps) assembled before Mayence ; the two flank armies were to assemble farther to the front, one in the direction of Trèves (First army, General von Steinmetz, two or three corps), the other round Landau (Third army, Crown Prince, five or six corps). This disposition of the troops would be dangerous if one of these armies were liable to receive the shock of the whole of the French forces ; but it was

GRAVELLOTTE



arranged that, if menaced by superior forces, the First army was not to await the shock and was to fall back along the Moselle. The Third army was to do the same in a similar case. If, during the very first days of mobilisation, the French advanced in the direction of Mayence and Frankfort, on both banks of the Rhine, their principal army, marching from Sarrebruck upon Mayence, would reach Mont-Tonnerre (the position of Marnheim), there to meet the whole of the Second army; the First army would then advance against the enemy's left flank; as for the Third army, according to circumstances it would defeat those of the French troops which might have crossed the Rhine, would stop them with the help of the fortresses of Rastadt and Germersheim, or would fall upon the right flank of the principal French army. As the French could undertake such an offensive with only the effective strength of peacetime, the Germans would have a great numerical superiority at the actual moment of the battle thus delayed.

If the French declined to risk taking the offensive so prematurely and mobilised regularly before acting, the assembly of the German armies was to be immediately followed by a forward march. This was to be carried out by the First and Second armies marching towards the line of Sarrelouis—Sarreguemines; the Third army was to attach itself to the left of the Second, after having fought by itself if necessary in Alsace, in order to drive out any troops that the French might have left there.

No specific plan had been arranged for the campaign as a whole, nor was one implied by the initial

distribution of the troops. Moltke would act according to circumstances.

The preparation of the arrangements described and their yearly revision were Moltke's task, together with the instruction of the officers and the General Staff. If we take into account the work inseparable from the drawing up of this plan, the studying of foreign armies and the organisation of the transport, it was a large enough task in itself without adding anything else to it.

Accordingly it is incorrect to consider Moltke as the organiser of the Prussian army, as is often done in France. The organisation and even the mobilisation were among the functions of the Minister of War, General von Roon, whose work was enormous. It was Roon especially who was King William's valued collaborator in the great reorganisation of 1860, by which the Prussian army was regenerated.

We must not forget that the Prussian victories of 1866 and 1870 were the joint work of four men :

1. King William, who chose his collaborators, beyond all doubt gave them their general direction, put an occasional check upon the vagaries due to the imagination of his ministers or of the chief of his staff, and when in doubt always enforced the solution dictated by common sense, of which events have demonstrated the value. Besides this general influence, King William, more than any other man, moulded the education of the Prussian army, and breathed into it a spirit of initiative and attack.

2. Bismarck, Minister of Foreign Affairs, directed Prussian policy among the German States and the great European powers.

3. Roon, Minister of War, reorganised the army, shortened the length of mobilisation, created the new services of telegraphs and railways, etc.

4. Lastly, Moltke prepared and carried out the plan of campaign, developed the knowledge of the high arts of war among the officers of the great General Staff, and by his incessant suggestions and proposals contributed more than any one else to the creation and utilisation of the railway system.

To these four men should perhaps be added a fifth, who, though he died before 1866, yet seems to have exercised considerable influence: General von Krauseneck, Moltke's last predecessor but one at the General Staff. By him or in accordance with his suggestions were drawn up the most important regulations; by him were organised the grand manœuvres as well as the Staff Tours, of which the first idea was due to Müffling. Krauseneck, Prince William's much-consulted adviser, exercised the greatest influence on the instruction and education of troops and generals. Most of the Prussian generals of 1866 and 1870 were formed under his guidance.

IV. THE FRENCH ARMY

The French army of 1870 was not recruited from the nation as a whole. The French people, who have always had a horror of military service, freed themselves from it as far as possible the moment they enjoyed representative government.

The generals who had been through the great wars asked on more than one occasion, particularly between 1828 and 1830, for the establishment of universal

service for a short period, three or four years ; but the representatives of the nation always opposed this solution with the utmost energy.

Therefore, between 1832 and 1870, the French army was composed partly of volunteers freely enlisted or of paid substitutes, partly of unfortunate conscripts, too poor to obtain substitutes and called to the colours for seven years. The majority of the electors were thus relieved of their nightmare of military service, while the rank and file were of first-rate quality. Whatever criticisms were passed towards the end of the Empire, especially by Trochu, as to the methods of substitution employed and the moral value of the substitutes, this old army perhaps proved itself to be the bravest that France had ever had, worthy at least of the vanquished of Waterloo and of the victors of Austerlitz.

But France could maintain only 400,000 men with the colours, and the long term of service turned out but few trained men to increase this number in case of war. The law of 1868 provided untrained reservists and *gardes mobiles* ; but all the deputies, without distinction of party, opposed any attempt at an effective organisation equipment and training of the *gardes mobiles*.

In point of fact, it proved impossible to take the field with more than 240,000 men ; this was the number produced by the peace footing of 400,000 men, increased by a few reservists, but decreased by the inevitable wastage, by the cadres of the dépôts, by the police, and by the African troops, etc.

The reservists recalled to the active corps had served with the colours for a long time ; they dis-

liked having to rejoin if war broke out, whilst the young men enrolled in the *gardes mobiles* were not embodied in the troops of the line for the campaigns. They loudly proclaimed their unwillingness, and did not show a very good spirit on the first battlefields.

The cadres of this army were very good. The Italian, Chinese, Algerian, and Mexican campaigns had hardened them both physically and morally. But no one had trained them for fighting such as was to take place between armies provided with modern weapons. The infantry, full of zeal, animated by the spirit of the offensive, was not trained in the proceedings of a modern offensive action. Still less was it familiar with the more delicate manœuvres required by a well-conducted defensive. The generals, who were entirely lacking in higher military instruction, might at a push have "muddled through" in the relatively simple operations of direct, frank, and vigorous attack, but the kind of vague defence to which they were constrained found them quite at a loss. Besides, only those among them who had recently served in distant countries had kept the necessary physical and moral energy; many others, not having been engaged in any war for a long while, and having had no manœuvres to conduct in France, and indeed no troops to command, had vegetated in the inaction of small military districts. They were no longer fit for active service, and set some distressing examples.

There was no carefully studied plan of campaign as there was in Prussia; and above all, there was no scheme based upon the principles of sound strategy.

Napoleon III vaguely intended taking the offensive in the direction of Mayence and Frankfort on both banks of the Rhine, and, influenced by Archduke Albert of Austria, he perhaps thought of extending his right to the east in order to separate Prussia from Bavaria, and to get into touch with Austria. But he knew neither the number of men that he could put into the field, nor, with any exactitude, the force of the enemy. Thus, whatever his schemes may have been, they lacked the necessary foundations.

V. THE OPERATIONS

Being in this state of uncertainty, he made the characteristic mistake of incapable generals and assembled his armies within reach of the enemy.

The troops which he thus assembled were on a peace footing; they had no reservists, no ammunition or *matériel*, and only a part of their equipment. A great number of water-bottles, blankets, and tunics were still due from the interior.

On July 30 the Germans had seven army corps concentrated, on July 31 they had ten, all absolutely complete in men and in *matériel*. If Moltke had acted with as little method as his opponents, and if he had pushed his transports up to the frontier, he might, on the 30th or 31st, have attacked the French corps while they were short of men and stores and were scattered all along the frontier. But, true to the fundamental principles of war, he assembled his forces out of reach of the enemy and did not begin offensive operations until the detraining of the troops and the concentration marches were

almost ended. On August 4 the Third army (the Crown Prince) invaded Alsace, crushing Abel Douay's division at Wissembourg. Continuing its march it defeated MacMahon at Froeschwiller on the 6th, and then swung to the south-west to join the other two armies.

These had pushed the heads of their columns as far as the Sarre on August 5. Being strong enough to fear no French attack, they had been moved forward to the frontier in order that the zone of detrainment might be advanced as far as possible ; but Moltke did not wish to attack before the Crown Prince's corps came into line. Fractions of different corps, however, defeated the 2nd French corps (Frossard) at Forbach on August 6, but Moltke waited until the 9th to resume the advance in conjunction with the Third army coming from Froeschwiller.

Napoleon III, after having pushed the French army corps up to the frontier without realising the portentous consequences of this rash act, was surprised and overwhelmed by the situation which was developing before his eyes. Owing to neglect of the most elementary precautions, convoys of *matériel* and reservists were started without warning of their departure having been sent to the corps which were to receive them ; they encumbered the stations and railway lines and compelled an interruption of the transport of the troops. The French army barely exceeded an effective strength of 200,000 men.

In Germany regularly organised armies, regularly transported, arrived complete, and with the huge numerical superiority of two to one.

Between July 30 and August 1 the French supreme

command was stunned and stupefied. It was incapable of action. It took no serious step to evade the blows which threatened it; the shock of the double disaster of the 6th was needed to awaken it with a start and to bring about the retreat. The retreat was carried out without a definite plan; the army retired as it came, without knowing why. In vain had General Frossard, in peace time, foreseen the possibility of German superiority enforcing a retreat, and had advised that it should take place along the great diagonal from Nancy to Bayonne. This advice was not followed. The troops from Lorraine retired upon Metz, and MacMahon collected the remnants of his army corps in the camp at Châlons. These two movements left the principal communications of the French armies at the enemy's mercy.

On August 8 Napoleon III began to group his troops round Metz; between August 9 and 14 the army of the Rhine merely concentrated more closely whilst MacMahon reached Neufchâteau, the 7th corps remained at Belfort, and a 12th corps was forming at Châlons.

By the 14th Napoleon III might have had twenty-eight active divisions between Châlons and Chaumont, and might have brought the effective strength up to 400,000 men by calling upon the reservists who had been left at the dépôts. The enemy would not have driven him from there before August 22, and could not have advanced as far as that without besieging or watching Strasbourg, Metz, Verdun, Toul, Belfort, and Langres.

But the army of the Rhine was halted under the protection of Metz, and nothing was done to prevent

the Germans from cutting its communications with the heart of France. The only line of retreat considered was that which led by Verdun to Paris, and it occurred to no one that this left a very restricted area to the north in which conquered armies would be rapidly hemmed in and forced to capitulate.

In reassembling at Metz the French left all the bridges over the Moselle and the Meurthe intact from Nancy to Thionville. The Prussian cavalry reached them on the 12th, and on this date the investment of the French army began. On the following day, the 13th, the cavalry sent out scouts on the plain between the Moselle and the Meuse. Without being as active in exploring as they might, they yet did enough to acquaint Moltke with the fact that the region round Nancy was unoccupied, and that the French had retired upon or by Metz. The necessary aim of the Prussian general was to gain ground to the southwest, to cut the communications between the centre of the country and the French army, and finally to fall upon it and drive it towards the Belgian frontier.

The German armies, therefore, proceeded to wheel upon a large front, their right (First army, Steinmetz) remaining stationary in front of the fortress of Metz, whilst the centre hastily reached the passages of the Moselle, and the left marched towards Nancy and Toul.

VI. ROUND METZ

Napoleon III at last determined to continue his retreat, but he felt himself weakened, discredited.

and incapable of the command, which he placed in the still more unskilful hands of Marshal Bazaine.

Bazaine hesitated between a retreat upon Verdun and one upon Toul at a moment when the former alone was barely possible. He finally decided to retreat upon Verdun, but being incapable of conceiving the movements of a great army, and refusing to rely upon his Staff for them, he issued for the 14th an order by which the whole army was simply to take the high-road to Gravelotte at five in the morning. There was an unprecedented overcrowding, but the generals managed to extricate themselves, and at four o'clock in the evening most of the army had evacuated Metz and was bivouacked on the left bank of the Moselle. There remained on the right bank only the 3rd corps and Cissey's division of the 4th corps.

At this moment the Prussian First army, having observed the retreat of the French, attacked in order to stop them. The 3rd and 4th corps faced this attack, and accepted battle at Borny. During the night the French corps resumed their movement through Metz and gained the left bank. During the 15th the corps which had not been engaged bivouacked between Rezonville and Gravelotte; the 3rd and 4th corps between Vernéville and Metz.

The march of the 16th might still have brought them to the gates of Verdun now that the skein had been pretty well unravelled, but this the zealous initiative of the Prussian generals did not permit. On August 14, whilst the First army was fighting the battle of Borny with the French, the corps of the centre and the left approached the Moselle. Side by

side with the Xth corps, which held Pont-à-Mousson, the Prussian Guard had reached Dieulouard ; three cavalry divisions were operating in front of them ; eight army corps following them, crowded between Nomény and Lunéville, and four others were one march away.

On the 15th the IIIrd corps reached the Moselle. The cavalry, though it encountered neither obstacle nor adversary, failed to discover the exact position of the French army. Moltke knew that part of this army had fought at Borny on the 14th and could not be far off ; the rest might have advanced towards Verdun. It was probable that the Prussian troops would shortly have gained ground enough towards the west to turn upon the French and force them northwards ; but it was especially important not to allow the escape of this all but certain prey by wheeling too soon. The orders for the 16th were therefore to continue the march towards the Meuse, the IIIrd and Xth corps on the right spreading themselves out to cover the rest of the army, the IXth corps following them closely, the Prussian Guard, XIIth and IVth corps farther to the south, on the road to Saint-Mihiel.

All these army corps constituted Frederick Charles's army ; Steinmetz's army to the north was still watching Metz ; the Crown Prince's army to the south was spread out between Nancy and Lunéville.

The 5th and 6th cavalry divisions and the IIIrd and Xth corps (Alvensleben and Voigts-Retz) attacked the French army in the morning near Vionville and Mars-la-Tour. The whole of the French forces, clumsily deployed and engaged without energy or

will to attack, failed to drive the two Prussian corps from the positions which they had won in the beginning. And once again the French army was stopped. But this time it was on the road to Verdun that the battle took place ; the shortest route of retreat was no longer free.

Bazaine did not try to regain the road to Verdun by a desperate attack or a forced march ; he fell back upon Metz. Moltke, in spite of his desire not to let his prey escape, was obliged to stop and concentrate the larger part of the troops of Steinmetz and Frederick Charles around Mars-la-Tour, so as to meet a possible French counter-offensive.

So in the morning of the 17th he sent the Prussian Guard and the XIIth corps (Saxon) towards Mars-la-Tour, to the left of the corps which had fought the day before, and three other corps to the neighbourhood of Gorze.

The Ist corps (Manteuffel) alone remained in observation before Metz, on the right bank ; the IIInd (Fransecky) reached Pont-à-Mousson. The remainder of the German forces, being too far off to take part in a battle near Metz, continued the march towards the Meuse on both sides of Toul.

Thus Moltke assembled more than 180,000 men to fight in case of need whatever he might meet between Metz and Verdun. He was certain of being numerically superior, whatever happened. If he only met part of the French army he would put it out of action ; the remainder which might have escaped him on the 18th would not escape a few days later from the enveloping movement executed by the Crown Prince's army on the right bank of the Meuse. Moltke's

dispositions guarded against everything, in spite of the lack of information from his cavalry.

VII. THE PREPARATIONS FOR BATTLE

Bazaine's order to retreat had astonished and profoundly depressed the army. The reasons alleged did not seem to be the real ones. It appeared certain that they concealed an ulterior motive; but the order was positive. Bazaine wrote to Napoleon III: "I hope to be able to start again the day after to-morrow, taking a more northerly direction," though at the same time he reconnoitred positions nearer to the forts, where the army would have its rear covered by the fortress of Metz. At the same hour he ordered the troops to entrench themselves in the positions they occupied. On the extreme left, that is to say, to the south, the 2nd corps with Lapasset's brigade held a ridge which commands Rozé-rieulles, the slopes of which on the Moselle side are covered by the Vaux woods. Between the French position and that which the German artillery was to take up lay the ravine of the Mance, of which only the bed is wooded.

To the north of the 2nd corps (Frossard) the 3rd corps (Leboeuf) occupied the exposed ridge which is crowned by the farms of Moscou, Leipzig, and La Folie. In front of this army corps the woods growing in the Mance ravine stretched quite a long way from the bed; they were called the woods of Gónivaux, and they encroached on the western bank between the farms of Mogador and Malmaison and the village of Vernéville.

To the north of the 3rd corps the 4th (Ladmirault)

occupied Montigny-la-Grange and the village of Amanvillers; at this point the Mance ravine is nothing more than a barely perceptible depression separating the plateau occupied by the French from the one on which the enemy was to establish himself later, between Vernéville and Habonville by the La Cusse wood.

The 6th corps occupied the extreme north of the plateau, that is to say, the villages of Saint-Privat and Roncourt. Here, the ridge bends towards the north-east and continues parallel to the Orne. From Saint-Privat and Roncourt the ground slopes gently towards the west and north-west, affording an incomparable field of fire. At the foot of the slope to the west are the villages of Saint-Ail and Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes, and to the north the undulating wooded valley of the Orne, which can be crossed at Auboué.

Bazaine established his head-quarters and assembled his reserves (the Guard) behind the left of the army, at Plappeville.

On the whole the position was exceedingly strong, and had all the qualities most valuable both for defence and for counter-attack, and even for a renewal of the offensive: it dominated the enemy's positions everywhere and afforded a wide field of fire except at the extreme left, where the intricate ground was flanked by Mont Saint-Quentin.

The position might have rested on one side upon the Moselle and on the other upon the Orne, and thus have been guaranteed against all outflanking movements. And the belts of wood on both sides of the ravine of the Mance were favourable to

counter-attacks even though carried out with considerable forces.

Unfortunately Bazaine did not think he could spread out his 150,000 men over more than eight miles, between Rozériculles and Roncourt; he did not push his right up to the valley of the Orne, and he placed his reserves neither behind his right, in a position to oppose an outflanking movement and to manœuvre on the exposed wing, nor behind his centre, to attack by the Génivaux woods or to be in a position to intervene at any point along the front. He did nothing, he arranged nothing; in short, he left the army to its fate.

His inaction played into the Germans' hands. Their cavalry had lost touch after the battle of August 16, and even on the evening of the 17th Moltke knew no more than Frederick Charles what had become of the French army—it might have retired towards Metz, or to the north-west, or have divided in these two directions. Frederick Charles, indeed, supposed the French to be in full retreat upon the Meuse, with only a rearguard between them and Rezonville. Steinmetz thought that the French had re-entered Metz. Each of them, in short, saw the enemy pressing in his direction, which is only human.

As for Moltke, whatever his personal opinion may have been, he had to act so as to be prepared for every eventuality. Whilst masking Metz the German armies had to gain ground to the north-west without loss of time. They could not allow the French to get the start towards the Meuse; if the French had retired upon Metz there would always

be time to turn upon this town, which was invested by the Ist corps on the east and the VIIth corps on the south.

So on the 17th towards noon Moltke ordered the Second Army (Frederick Charles) to advance on August 18 in echelon towards the north. The VIIIth corps (Goeben), which was part of the First Army, was to follow up this movement. Further decisions were to be made according to the dispositions of the enemy when they became known.

In order to execute Moltke's movement and to be ready to deploy, either straight ahead or to the left, Frederick Charles did not form up his army corps in long columns on the roads; but, at the risk of slackening the speed of their advance, he ordered each of his army corps to march in close formation. By an inexplicable whim he ordered the Xth corps (Saxon) and the Guard to cross each other, which resulted in the latter being considerably delayed.

By nine o'clock on the 18th the Prussian generals had received some information. They knew that there were French troops on the heights of Rozé-riculles and Amanvillers. But the question was, had the French army any intention of halting there, or did they intend continuing their retreat towards Briey? Being in doubt, Frederick Charles ordered the advance to be resumed; but at the end of an hour camps were signalled on the heights of Montigny-la-Grange and Amanvillers. As soon as Frederick Charles knew the French to be stationary he stopped the movement towards Briey and wheeled to the right to attack. He made no attempt to reconnoitre the French position in order to discover its exact

extent ; he persuaded himself without more ado that the French right was at Amanvillers.

He ordered the IXth corps (Manstein) to march upon Montigny-la-Grange and Amanvillers and to attack at once, *if the French right should be there*.

In spite of this hypothetical expression he seemed to assume that it was certainly not to the north, for he sent the Guard, not farther to the north, but to form a second line behind the IXth corps with the IIIrd as a last reserve ; the XIIth corps (Saxon) alone was ordered to continue its march towards Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes, whence it was to turn southwards and to fall upon Amanvillers from the north.

At the same time Moltke had the same erroneous conviction that the entire French army was on the front Rozérieulles - Amanvillers, and he had about the same idea of the disposition of the German troops as Frederick Charles ; only he wanted the battle to be engaged simultaneously along the whole front, and not to be started by the IXth corps.

About 10.30 he issued the following order :

“The attack must be made simultaneously ; by the First Army starting from the wood of Vaux ; by the IXth corps against the Génivaux woods and Vernéville, by the left wing of the Second Army from a northerly direction.”

However, at the moment when this order reached the Second Army the battle had started. General Manstein did not trouble to make sure that the French right really was at Amanvillers ; what was worse, he paid no attention to a reconnaissance report which signalled a camp at Saint-Privat.

From the neighbourhood of Vernéville he had seen

French camps near Montigny-la-Grange, and could not resist the temptation to disturb them with his shells.

Without having called forward and deployed his advance guard, he ordered up two-thirds of his artillery at the trot and placed it on a crest which lay diagonally like a bridge between Vernéville and Amanvillers. There, this artillery was within short range of the guns, machine guns, and rifles of the French lines. In a few moments, after having had the satisfaction of waking up the French, it was overwhelmed by their fire (a little before noon). The two foremost batteries were charged by a small troop of French infantry; they tried to escape into the woods in rear, but left on the ground a number of dead and wounded, many horses, and part of their *matériel*. The French infantry carried away two guns.

As soon as the guns of the IXth corps were heard, the other corps hastened to march towards the enemy and to engage him.

In conformity with Moltke's intention, and as the natural sequel of the arrangements made up till then, these attacks gave rise to three practically separate conflicts.

To the right, between the Moselle and the Malmaison farm, the troops of Steinmetz (VIIth corps, Zastrow, and VIIIth corps, Goeben) fought the battle of Gravelotte against Frossard's corps and part of Leboeuf's corps.

In the centre, the IXth corps (Manstein) attacked Leboeuf's right and Ladmirault at Montigny-la-Grange and Amanvillers. To the left, the Prussian

Guard and the Saxons (XIIth corps) attacked Canrobert's corps which occupied Saint-Privat and Roncourt.

Steinmetz was to be supported by the IIInd corps (Fransecky), which was to come up in the afternoon.

The IIIrd corps (Alvensleben) was behind the IXth and supported it with its artillery.

The Xth corps (Voigts-Rhetz) was in second line behind the Guard.

VIII. THE FIGHTING AT GRAVELOTTE

On the French left, the 2nd corps (Frossard) had fortified itself strongly between the high-road from Metz to Gravelotte, and the spur which dominates Rozérieulles. One division had been able to deploy with great difficulty along the road ; the 2nd division was in reserve ; Lapasset's brigade occupied the spur of Rozérieulles, where it was supported by the guns of Saint-Quentin, 2,200 yards away.

The Guard was in reserve between Plappeville and Mont Saint-Quentin ; its cavalry remained behind Rozérieulles in an area cramped between the steep heights and the Moselle, where it could be of no service.

To the right of Frossard's corps, Leboeuf (the 3rd corps) had placed his three divisions in line, each one squeezed into a narrow space, and compelled to leave strong reserves in the second line. This army corps had fortified its position strongly.

Near to the Gravelotte-Metz road, Leboeuf had sent a few companies forward into the ravine. One occupied the farm of Saint-Hubert 550 yards from the trenches and 550 yards from the Mance stream,

where desperate fighting was to take place during a great part of the day.

On their side the Prussians the previous evening had occupied the Vaux woods and the villages of Gravelotte and Ars-sur-Moselle. The VIIth corps, commanded by Zastrow under the immediate supervision of Steinmetz, was scattered about there, incapable of united action. Moreover, on the 17th this corps had been given a purely defensive mission. It had therefore made no preparations in view of an offensive movement on Rozérieulles and the Point-du-Jour, when suddenly at noon on the 18th it received the order to attack. It could not advance on its right for lack of guns, for no one thought of bettering the two roads through the Vaux woods in order to make them practicable for artillery.

The VIIth corps, scattered on the edge of the Vaux wood, did not succeed in debouching from it until about five o'clock ; it captured the village of Jussy from the few companies which occupied it, but at this point the artillery of Saint-Quentin put an abrupt end to its progress.

The principal action developed between Gravelotte and the Point-du-Jour. The artillery of the VIIth corps and then that of the VIIIth corps (Goeben) were deployed successively to the south and north of Gravelotte ; first to a position where the ranges varied between 2,500 and 3,000 yards, then to a second position 2,200 yards from the French trenches and batteries. These, whose fire was only effective at about 1,500 or 3,200 yards, were quite powerless and were only partly engaged. It was useless for their 170 guns to reply to the

132 Prussian guns, as the effect of their fire between 2,200 and 3,000 yards was practically negligible.

Thus the fire of the German artillery prepared and supported the attacks of its infantry in perfect security.

Half of the VIIIth corps was engaged at the very beginning. Its thirteen battalions crossed the woods which covered the bed of the ravine, but were held up at the edge by the French fire. At three o'clock they were still there, and a quarter of this mass concentrated its fire on the Saint-Hubert farm, which was occupied by two French companies 220 yards from the wood. This farm became the centre of attraction for a large part of the German forces. Many men fell out, disappearing in the woods or in the village of Gravelotte on the pretext of escorting wounded. The scrub along the Mance was full of terrified soldiers. At length some Prussian batteries fired upon Saint-Hubert, and in a few moments the fire of the defenders weakened so much that the Prussians were able to leave the woods and hurl themselves upon the farm. They were masters of it at about three o'clock; eighteen companies crowded into it.

Steinmetz believed the whole French army to be routed, and he ordered the pursuit without delay. He wished to hurl a cavalry division and all the artillery of the 7th corps upon the French, and he ordered all his infantry to advance.

Batteries, squadrons, and companies in a crowd encumbered one another on the Gravelotte-Metz high-road, the only passage across the ravine. The infantry, thus thrown into disorder, made way and threw themselves into the brushwood; the first four

batteries to issue forth upon exposed ground found themselves under a terrible fire of infantry and artillery at short range; one of them managed to reach Saint-Hubert and to unlimber under cover of a wall; another fled into the wood, whence it did not emerge until the next day; the other two were almost annihilated. The cavalry came under a terrific fire which threw them into confusion. The regiment at their head managed, while deploying, to gain the edge of the Vaux wood. The remainder, in unutterable confusion, fell back and rallied near Gravelotte.

The infantry had been unable to advance from its cover; this disaster, the precipitate backward movement of the cavalry, shook all but the steadiest of the skirmishers; and the fugitives, distracted with terror, thronged into the bed of the ravine.

Steinmetz had brought two brigades of infantry forward, one belonging to the VIIIth corps, towards Moscou, the other, belonging to the VIIth corps, towards the sand-pits of the Point-du-Jour. The first deployed methodically, forming skirmishers followed by small columns; but was immediately stopped by the French fire. Falling back a little way in disorder under the heavy fire, the Prussians crowded into the Saint-Hubert farm and around its walls. Between five and seven o'clock in the evening more than 3,000 men belonging to forty-three different units could be seen swarming there. A few companies of the brigade of the VIIth corps were pushed forward into the sand-pits; but suddenly, towards 3.45, they saw a thick chain of French skirmishers issuing from the Metz road and running towards the sand-pits on a front

of some 600 yards. The five German companies here posted fled at full speed, and shortly afterwards the four platoons lying in wait at the southern point of the quarries followed suit. The same thing happened to the few men who had come up to within a short distance of the quarries. The disorganised flight of the groups of men escaping from the sandpits and quarries made such an impression on the men deployed on the edge of the coppice that they fired without noticing that their bullets mostly hit the pursued. These, in sheer panic, hurled themselves through the firing-line and carried it with them back into the coppice.

Having achieved so much, the few French companies which had made the counter-attack withdrew to their line. A little later the Prussians sent three fresh companies to the sand-pits, but they did not attempt to issue from them until seven o'clock. On their side the French did not move, and their fire slackened greatly; at intervals it even ceased altogether.

A little after six o'clock Steinmetz decided to send in the last brigade of his army. He collected it at the exit from Gravelotte, where it was massed at about 6.45.

The French, seeing in the sunset an undulating sea of helmets, bestirred themselves and reopened fire with the utmost violence. The numerous Germans massed together in Saint-Hubert, who had lost all tactical cohesion, and were becoming demoralised by their disorder and even by their very numbers, were shaken by this sudden hail of bullets and fled, with shouts of panic. They carried with them

some of the poor fellows who lay shivering with terror in the bed of the ravine and they threw themselves blindly upon the brigade massed before Gravelotte, and then upon the batteries in action.

“Officers with drawn swords galloped to meet this mob; in vain. The terror-stricken fugitives ran straight on towards the guns and right through the batteries, deaf to the frantic shouts of the gunners who tried to rally them.”

As soon as the ground was clear, the brigade which Steinmetz had prepared advanced until it was level with Saint-Hubert. The first two battalions succeeded in deploying, but were almost immediately thrown back upon the farm by the French fire. The next battalion did not get so far, and took cover on the sides of the road. A little later, a brave man, General von Barnekow, managed to make them rise and go forward, but in vain; the fire of the defenders hurled them back in a few moments. A fourth battalion was no more successful, and melted away in a very short time into the mass already occupying Saint-Hubert.

A hussar regiment, which had the singular idea of attempting an attack where the infantry had just failed, suffered enormous losses, reeled beneath the fire, and, panic-stricken, fled at full gallop. It only drew rein at Vionville, carrying away with it in its flight a number of led horses and vehicles of all descriptions, which were posted behind Gravelotte.

Towards five o'clock the King and the Great Headquarters had established themselves to the north of this village near to the Mogador farm. They witnessed the disaster to the last brigade of the 1st army.

The IInd army corps, which had left Pont-à-Mousson in the morning and belonged to the Second Army (Frederick Charles), had been directed provisionally on Rezonville. Towards 5.30 the King sent orders for it to make its way towards Gravelotte. At eight o'clock, again by the King's orders, of which Moltke apparently disapproved, the IInd army corps was sent forward to the attack. At the same time the King and his following left the field of battle to go to Rezonville.

Steinmetz resolved to attack with all the regularly constituted battalions in his VIIth army corps which he could collect, as well as with the IInd corps. He could dispose of ten battalions, two issuing from Gravelotte in the direction of the Point-du-Jour, three from the Mance mill going towards the quarries, and five from the north-west corner of the Vaux wood towards the Metz road, between the quarries and Rozérieulles. In the darkness these feeble attacks failed from the very outset.

As for the IInd corps, it made dispositions suitable for a night encounter, by sending a massed division in the direction marked by the road from Gravelotte to Metz. But it had barely got on the move when it received an intimation that Saint-Hubert was again in French hands, and it sent a regiment to attack this farm. The regiment opened fire immediately. "A tremendous outcry arose from the neighbourhood of Saint-Hubert, and a yelling mob hurled itself upon the first line of the 54th, through which it broke, carrying with it a number of the men of this regiment."

In order to escape from the tide of fugitives the division swerved prematurely to the south of the road,

continued its march through the wood and there broke up. One regiment lost itself in the direction of the quarries, and melted into the line which already lay along the edge of the wood. The second regiment marched as nearly as possible towards the Point-du-Jour, but was also carried away by the fugitives; only two companies held to their direction, the remainder lost themselves among the confused groups of men who occupied Saint-Hubert and the Vaux wood.

The last regiment of the division, more cautious, remained massed upon the road. A last brigade, following the very same route, was still advancing towards ten o'clock; but the impossibility of producing any result was obvious, and General von Fransecky ordered the action to cease.

By Moltke's order, which arrived during the night, the VIIth and VIIIth corps rallied on the plateau of Gravelotte, covered by the IIInd corps, which formed up level with Saint-Hubert.

Thus, though attacking with three army corps on this narrow front, the Germans had not succeeded in making an impression upon the French position. The French had not been able to employ more than half the forces that were crowded together on their left wing (not to speak of the general reserve formed by the Guard), and yet the defence had been hindered by the density of the troops in the front line. On both sides forces had been squandered on this position.

IX. THE FIGHTING AT VERNÉVILLE

We have seen under what conditions General Manstein, commanding the IXth Prussian corps, had

begun the battle between Vernéville and Amanvillers. Ten of his batteries without infantry support had taken up a position on a ridge which stretched from Vernéville to Amanvillers, and had opened a surprise fire upon the French camps of Montigny-la-Grange. But the French had quickly stood to arms and had got into line before suffering great losses. The left of the Prussian artillery, which had ventured well within range of the French skirmishers' rifles, had been overwhelmed by the fire of the infantry, artillery, and especially of the machine guns. A few pieces had been got away with great difficulty; others were carried off by the French. One battery alone had lost more than a hundred horses. Towards three o'clock nothing remained of this line of artillery but the three batteries on the right, absolutely isolated on the field of battle, in the middle of an empty space a mile and a half wide. The three first battalions of their army corps which had debouched at the same time had been sent to the right towards the Chantrenne farm on the edge of the Génivaux wood, and had established themselves there in direct contact with the French. The three next battalions had been sent successively towards the left of the batteries to act as their support, but the fire was so violent that these battalions had literally been swept off the exposed places into the little woods of la Cusse, where, much weakened and scattered, they skirmished with the French, who were established 650 yards away before Amanvillers. At this distance the chasse-pot was far superior to the needle-gun, and the Prussians maintained an unequal struggle.

Opposite the IXth Prussian corps the French had

two divisions of the 3rd corps (Leboeuf) and the whole of General de Ladmirault's corps (4th); Marshal Leboeuf had thrust four battalions into the Génivaux wood at random; the remainder of his troops were established in the trenches on the crest of the plateau between Montigny-la-Grange and Leipzig. General de Ladmirault had had no entrenchments made, and had issued no dispositions: he had one division (Grenier) south of Amanvillers, another (de Cissey) to the north, and the third (Lorencez) in the rear, facing Metz!

The first line of the 4th corps was pushed several hundred yards in front of Montigny-la-Grange and Amanvillers to cover with its fire all the slopes descending to the Mance stream. No point was held in front of this line, and the enemy easily established himself in the farms of Chantrenne, l'Envie, and Champenois, which might have played a part like that of Saint-Hubert.

The IXth Prussian corps consisted of a Prussian division and the Hessian division. We saw how the first half of the Prussian division had been split into two portions 2,700 yards apart, one towards Chantrenne, the other in the La Cusse woods. The remainder of this division had not yet arrived when the Hessian division appeared. It was thrust complete into the La Cusse wood and deployed its artillery to the north facing Saint-Privat, pushing its infantry forward through the wood to the outer edge. It was still there at five o'clock in the evening after a bloody conflict with the French skirmishers posted in front of Amanvillers.

The rest of the Prussian division had come into

line ; a line of nine batteries had been re-formed in the original position, and its fire converged with that of another weaker line, formed to the south-east of Vernéville. A few infantry companies covered this artillery in front, a Hessian battalion supported it on the left ; three others, held in reserve at first, were finally sent to the Génivaux woods, so that the position was solidly supported on both wings.

At this moment the IIIrd corps (Alvensleben) had come up in reserve behind Vernéville, and part of its artillery became engaged to the east of Vernéville, resting the attack upon the edge of the Génivaux wood, which enabled the Prussians to push forward on this side to within 1,300 yards of Leipzig.

Towards 5.30 a brigade of the Guard was sent to General von Manstein to reinforce the attack upon Amanvillers, at the time when the rest of the Guard was attacking Saint-Privat.

This brigade of the Guard was brought up in massed formation behind the La Cusse woods, separated to go through them, and then deployed regularly on a front of 1,100 yards to pass out of them. Vigorously led, this line made a rush forward, so that the French skirmishers were shaken and fell back several hundred paces. This attack cost the Guard 40 per cent. of its effective strength in half an hour, including three-quarters of the officers. It ceased at about seven o'clock, and until nightfall the conflict remained stationary along the whole front of the IXth corps. The French opposite them did not attempt a serious counter-attack. Towards seven o'clock Marshal Canrobert informed General de Ladmirault that he was evacuating

Saint-Privat and retiring on the woods in the rear of Amanvillers.

X. THE ATTACK ON SAINT-PRIVAT

On August 18, at the moment when the guns of the IXth Prussian corps were giving the signal for battle, Marshal Canrobert's corps was assembled round Saint-Privat. The Marshal made some dispositions, posting a brigade to the north of Saint-Privat as far as Roncourt, as a defensive flank, and deploying a brigade between Saint-Privat and Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes, facing south, as if he were forming an offensive flank against the German left, which was not in sight. Two-thirds of the army corps remained south of Saint-Privat, crowded on a front of 1,200 yards, whilst four regiments held the villages of Saint-Privat and Roncourt and the front of 2,700 yards which included them.

Soon after 11.30, Prince Frederick Charles, in command of the Second Army, the Prince of Würtemberg, in command of the Prussian Guard, and the Crown Prince of Saxony, in command of the XIIth corps (Saxon), received intelligence of the occupation of Saint-Privat and Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes by the French. The Guard and the XIIth corps therefore bore to the left, but it was only towards two o'clock that the Guard came into action; a few of its companies were pushed towards Saint-Ail, and two-thirds of its artillery were deployed between this village and that of Habonville, in order to fire upon Saint-Privat at 2,500 and 2,800 yards. The French artillery, numerically superior but ineffective, soon gave up the struggle; but the

Prussian artillery suffered cruelly from the fire of the French skirmishers posted 1,000 yards away.

At this moment a division of the Guard came up; a few of its battalions deployed against Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes and the main body massed a little to the rear; but the general in command of this division (von Pape) doubtless exaggerated the strength of the French detachment in Sainte-Marie and awaited the help of the Saxons before attacking. The presence of one French regiment at Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes appears to have neutralised sixteen Prussian battalions.

The Saxon corps led by the Crown Prince of Saxony, who showed himself the ablest of all the German generals of 1870, had been sent, partly towards Batilly and partly right into the valley of the Orne to outflank the French right, if it were at Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes. The brigade on the right, sent towards Batilly, continued its way towards Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes and attacked in concert with the Guard.

About 3.30 ninety-four guns and fifteen battalions dislodged the two French battalions stationed at Sainte-Marie-aux-Chênes. The Saxons tried to pursue the defenders in the direction of Roncourt, but were caught in flank by the fire of a line of French skirmishers stationed 1,000 yards to their right. They were obliged to return to Sainte-Marie and to rally west of the village at 5.30.

Recognising that the French right must reach as far as Roncourt, the Prince of Saxony as early as four o'clock had directed the remainder of his corps more to the north; one brigade taking the direction from Auboué to Roncourt, another creeping along the

Orne valley from Auboué towards Montois, and the last following after two hours' delay, due to the détour made on the north-west bank of the Orne.

The second act of the battle was to begin in the region of Saint-Privat.

Whilst the Saxon corps was carrying out very precise orders, well thought out with reference to the situation, the ground, and the map, in order to end by outflanking the French right without disclosing itself prematurely, Prince Frederick Charles lost patience. He thought that this part of the action was being conducted without sufficient vigour; he became irritable and used cutting language to the generals of the Guard. At five o'clock a particularly stinging expression was too much for the Prince of Würtemberg. The result was the famous and bloody attack of the Prussian Guard on Saint-Privat and the farm of Jerusalem.

The Prince of Würtemberg, to set his troops in motion, gave his orders to the general of division, von Pape, a cool and collected man who knew his business.

“ Von Pape objected that the village of Saint-Privat had not yet been subjected to artillery fire, and that it was strongly held; that it looked just like a fortress, and it could not be taken without enormous loss.

“ The Prince of Würtemberg having replied that the artillery corps was firing on Saint-Privat, General von Pape answered: ‘ I beg your pardon, the artillery has been silent for the last hour and Saint-Privat is intact.’

“ The commander of the Guard could not conceal

his impatience at these words and exclaimed : ‘ The Prince of Saxony has sent me word that he would attack Roncourt at five o’clock ; it is now 5.30, and we are late. Go on ! ’

“ The commander of the first division again protested :

“ ‘ Will Your Highness be good enough to take a few steps outside the village ? you will then see for yourself where the Saxons are, and that the guns are silent. ’ ”

“ ‘ No, I will not. The Prince of Saxony sent me word and the other division is moving off ; we cannot let it go on alone. Do as you are told. You always want the last word. ’ ”

There was nothing to do but obey. Without the artillery being warned, the three brigades of the Guard were sent forward to the attack at 5.30. South of the road the troops, who were less numerous there, were formed into a line of skirmishers followed by a line of small columns of companies 220 yards behind ; 220 yards farther back still, a second similar line. In spite of enormous losses they advanced in half an hour to within some 600 yards of the French skirmishers, but there they lay down completely exhausted. Those who were deployed to the north of the road suffered still more ; for they made two changes of direction, under fire, in close formation, before sending out a line of skirmishers against Saint-Privat. They too came to a standstill morally and physically exhausted, 550 yards away from the ridge occupied by the French skirmishers.

Thus ended the attack of the Prussian Guard, ordered in a moment of thoughtless impatience, and

undertaken without preparation and with faulty dispositions. It had no doubt brought the infantry of the Guard to within 500 paces of the French lines, but with such losses (more than a third of the effective strength) and such nervous exhaustion that all this infantry lay on the ground incapable of taking up the struggle again.

But other events happening at the same time were to break the force of the French resistance and permit the Prussian Guard to invade and capture the positions which it had been unable to take from the front by sheer courage.

Between 5.30 and 6 the Saxons issued from the woods which border the Orne valley. The foremost columns, marching from west to east, came to within 660 yards of the defenders of Roncourt and began the struggle. Their numerous artillery had opened fire on the village 1,000 yards away. Only three French batteries were within range to reply to them.

Farther north, numerous columns of battalions were to be seen debouching on both sides of Montois, beginning the march, from the north-west to the south-east, which was to bring them to the rear of Roncourt, without meeting with any resistance, and was thus to start the progressive demolition of the whole French line. These troops appeared about six o'clock 1,100 yards away from the rear companies of the French extreme right wing, those which no longer had any one to the right of them.

Thereafter the effects of the outflanking movement developed with extreme rapidity and were twofold, as always happens : agitation of the French command

and hasty dispositions to bend its right into a defensive curve ; demoralisation of the troops along the whole front, as the word passed along that the right wing had been turned.

From Roncourt to Saint-Privat and from Saint-Privat to Jerusalem, the rumour spread in a few moments that the enemy had turned our right and that all was lost, and immediately the troops gave ground, battalion after battalion. The way in which this phenomenon occurred is marvellously described in a valuable first-hand account which General Bonnal has discovered and published. It is the narrative of a non-commissioned officer whose battalion was engaged in the defence of Jerusalem.

“ We had had no occasion for very much firing between noon and five o'clock, but a persistent rain of shells, which were not aimed at us, passed over our heads, exposing us to short bursts and shaking our nerves to the utmost.

“ Suddenly we saw on our right the 25th running away completely disorganised. The movement spread in our direction with the regularity of a wave, and when it reached us, our men began to run like the others, without knowing why, shouting : ‘ We are turned,’ a cry which came from their right and which they merely repeated.”

Thanks to this panic the Prussians were able to resume their forward march and to gain ground ; a counter-attack on their right flank by Cissey's division stopped them for a while, but at this precise moment four batteries arrived at full gallop and opened fire, point-blank, upon the counter-attacking troops, forcing them to retire immediately ; not,

however, before they had given time to the line south of Saint-Privat to be re-formed. At length, towards 6.45 this artillery caught the French line obliquely south-west of Jerusalem, and, forcing it to evacuate the ditch by the road in which it was lying, drove it back. Thus at seven o'clock the Prussian infantry was able to reach the ridge of Saint-Privat.

At the same hour the Saxons had completed their deployment round Roncourt, and the French had evacuated this village, turning back their right wing and resting it on the edge of the wood (forest of Jaumont).

The Saxons attacked Roncourt with large masses, though this village was now only occupied by a few men; these Saxon battalions became mixed up there in the greatest confusion and only at 7.30 were able to pass out to march on Saint-Privat. But the outflanking movement, though slowly carried out, had already produced its effect, as much by favouring the progress of the Prussian Guard to the south of Saint-Privat, as by determining Marshal Canrobert to refuse his right and thus to make of Saint-Privat a salient upon which all the projectiles of a huge circle of batteries converged. At this moment twelve battalions were crowded in the village under the fire of 150 German guns; fourteen battalions were closely massed in rear.

Towards 7.15 the Prussians, who had previously gained ground to the south of Saint-Privat, rushed to the attack and penetrated to the first houses on that side. By degrees the Prussians and Saxons rose up and charged, entering Saint-Privat from all sides at once. Then most of the defenders

evacuated the village; only a handful of heroes held on to the last in the cemetery. It was past eight o'clock when the combat ceased at this place for lack of combatants. Already the entire artillery of the Guard and of the Saxon corps joined by that of the Xth corps, 270 guns in all, were pursuing the retreating French with their fire and beginning to bombard Amanvillers.

The French artillery stationed at the edge of the woods replied, but night had fallen and the two adversaries fired to no purpose.

During the night Marshal Canrobert continued his retreat towards Metz; General de Ladmirault, warned by him, was able to retire with less disorder. Marshal Leboeuf and General Frossard followed the movement later.

The Imperial Guard, commanded by Bourbaki, had been placed in reserve at Plappeville. In the afternoon the division of Grenadiers was sent to the right, and at five o'clock had got within a league of Saint-Privat; but an hour and a half later Bourbaki regretted this movement and went back again.

It was not till 7.30 that he again sent a brigade and five batteries to the north. These opened fire uselessly at 8.30 on Saint-Privat, which was already in flames.

Marshal Bazaine, who had remained inactive all day, quietly sat down to dinner at seven o'clock and accepted his defeat with complete equanimity.

When General de Ladmirault reported that his position at Amanvillers was still strong, and that he meant to renew the fight next day, Bazaine replied :

“ There is no question of that. We meant to be

off to-morrow morning ; we shall be off this evening, that is all ! ”

He did not understand that the fate of France had just been decided.

After this victory it was not long before the Germans had the French army surrounded in Metz. Soon the Government, misled by Bazaine's false reports, allowed itself to be drawn into sending the last remaining regular troops it had been able to collect towards Montmédy, and this resulted in the disaster of Sedan.

In spite of the entire loss of two armies France was able to continue the struggle, not without hope of victory ; but the cause of her defeats, the incompetence of the command, remained and frustrated all her efforts to regain the advantage.

MUKDEN ¹

(1905)

I. THE THEATRE OF WAR

THE war between Japan and Russia in 1904-5 was fought in a theatre of very limited dimensions. All the engagements took place either in the Liao-tung peninsula or else in a part of Manchuria measuring not more than 125 miles each way.

The chain of mountains that forms the backbone of Liao-tung, and branches all over that peninsula, is the end of a chain running from north-east to south-west between the countries of Manchuria and Korea, and separating the basin of the river Liao Ho from that of the Yalu.

These two rivers played an important part in the campaign; they flow in valleys with wide flat floors along which they form countless branches. The Yalu, which forms the north-western boundary of Corea, is several thousand yards wide as it nears its mouth; while its left bank is low, its right bank is commanded by hills. The Liao Ho, which falls into the gulf of Pe-chi-li north of Liao-tung, flows across a plain sixty miles wide; its tributaries, with their affluents, here often run parallel with it for a long way before joining the main stream. The two most important tributaries are the Hun Ho, passing close to Mukden, and the Tai-tzu Ho, close to Liao-yang. The

¹ See maps facing page 216.

latter receives on its right bank—in the country, that is to say, between Mukden and Liao-yang—the Sha Ho, which has again for a left-bank tributary the Shih-li Ho.

The Mandarin road and the railway from Port Arthur to Harbin skirt the foot of the mountains by way of Ta-shih-chiao, Hai-cheng, Liao-yang, Mukden, and Tieh-ling, and mark the boundary between plain and mountain belt. East of this line, the water-courses come down from the high land from east to west: west of it, they all sweep round southward except the Shih-li Ho, which runs almost straight into the Sha Ho.

The plain is quite level and covered with *kaoling*, a kind of millet whose stalks grow to a great height, sometimes as much as ten feet. In wet weather this plain is impassable; during frost, passage across it is in this degree easier that the streams are frozen over, but the cold is terribly severe, and temperatures several degrees below zero (Fahrenheit) last a long time.

Hilly country begins immediately east of the railway line; it shortly takes on a genuine mountain aspect, with steep slopes and rocky scarps, so that in the great battles of Liao-yang, of the Sha Ho, and of Mukden, part of the fighting took place in the plain, part in a hilly region, and part amid mountains.

General Kuroki's army, which occupied the Japanese right, operated all the time in mountainous country: this fact impressed a special character on his operations. The small number and limited width of practicable lines of advance compelled him to stretch his grasp over wide reaches of country and to subdivide his forces. It would be illusory to reckon the

196 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

average density of his troops on the battlefield by dividing their total numbers by the number of yards of front on which they were engaged.

II. THE CONTENDING ARMIES

The artillery *matériel* in use in the Russian and Japanese armies in 1904-5 was infinitely superior to that employed by the Germans in 1870, but it was not yet the quick-firing, shielded artillery with which European armies are now provided.

“When war broke out, Russia had just adopted a new field gun, not a real quick-firer, but a weapon with a higher rate of fire than previous guns, and capable of from four to six effective rounds every minute. It was furnished with only one type of projectile, a shrapnel with time fuse for ranges up to nearly 6,000 yards. This was over a thousand yards farther than the range possible with the Japanese shrapnel fuse.

“The proportion of artillery, which in Europe tends to reach six guns to a battalion, was no more than two and a half guns to a battalion for the whole army. Because of this low proportion the part played on the battlefield by the Russian artillery in Manchuria could be only half as important as may be expected in a war in Europe.”

With the Japanese, “the proportion of artillery was higher than it was with the Russians. In every division there were three guns to a battalion. The Japanese field gun was fairly comparable with the Russian weapon; but the time fuse allowed of shrapnel fire only up to ranges well under 5,000 yards,

roughly a thousand yards less than the Russian fuse.”¹ The Japanese field guns also fired a high-explosive shell with percussion fuse, corresponding to the French melinite shell.

The Japanese employed, in addition, heavy guns for high-angle fire, and mountain guns of small power but great mobility. The Russians had only a dozen mountain batteries. When the battle of Mukden was fought, both armies possessed large numbers of machine guns, with the cavalry as well as with the infantry.

The Japanese made use of no troops without full organisation, cadres, and training; two-thirds of the infantry were regular soldiers of the first line, organised in thirteen divisions, while the remainder formed thirteen reserve brigades. Either on principle, or else for lack of cadres, the number of reserve units was never increased; reinforcements sent from the depots were incorporated in the existing first line or reserve units, in both of which the strength of a company often exceeded the regulation figure.

The Japanese cavalry was weak in numbers; it amounted to no more than three squadrons with each infantry division, besides two independent brigades. Horses and men alike were of only moderate quality; yet this cavalry did excellent service, because of the spirit which animated it and the good use to which it was put.

The organisation of the staff and army services

¹ From *Considérations sur la campagne de Mandchourie*, by General Silvestre: Paris, 1910.

was perfect, and their working smooth to a degree ; but of still greater importance was the warrior spirit of old Japan that breathed in soldiers and in commanders, whose behaviour was at once highly methodical and boldly offensive.

The Russian troops certainly did not show all the good qualities to be met with among their opponents. The organisation of some of the larger units was only created for the war ; a large proportion of the troops were men from the reserve, part of them raised in Siberia, sometimes of advanced age, and largely without training, and the rest called up in Europe and ill content to be sent to a war, the reason for which they did not understand, while soldiers already with the colours were left behind.

In spite of these reasons why the Russian troops were plainly below the standard set by the Japanese, it seems clear that the courage of the Russian soldiers always deserved praise. It was rather the defective training of the cadres that sometimes put the Russian troops at a disadvantage in face of their opponents. The truth seems to be that the commanders, in all ranks, were not up to their work ; and this was what brought about the Russian defeat. The results that were secured whenever the Russian troops were led with uncompromising vigour show that, no matter what were their failings, they were fit to win, if only the leading as a whole had been better.

The Japanese army, once disembarked, received its reinforcements and its fresh supplies by sea. This

meant a voyage of not less than 900 miles, roughly equal in distance to that from Marseilles to Casablanca on the west coast of Morocco. The Russian army was continuously reinforced, and its supplies of ammunition and *matériel* made good, by the trans-Siberian railroad, over 4,000 miles long. "The train service, which at the beginning of the war gave six trains daily in each direction, was brought up by degrees to seven, eight, eleven, thirteen, and finally sixteen trains as the number of crossing-places and the quantity of rolling stock increased." When one thinks what the single trans-Siberian line was before the war, this figure of sixteen trains daily is wonderful. Nevertheless the Russians never succeeded in bringing troops into Manchuria in great masses, as so large a proportion of the transport was used up for *matériel*.

III. EARLIER OPERATIONS

On the night of February 8-9, 1904, without any previous declaration of war, the Japanese fleet attacked the Russian ships at Chemulpho and in the roadstead of Port Arthur. It thus gained absolute security for the transports between Japan and the mainland.

Disembarkation of troops began almost at once; but the first division to arrive—the Twelfth, belonging to Kuroki's army—took about a month to disembark at three points on the coast of Corea; it was not concentrated at Seoul until March. Covered by this division, the remainder of the First Army disembarked, also in Corea, and formed its marching columns for an advance upon the Yalu.

In the month of February the Russians had in Manchuria only 40 battalions of infantry, 3,000 Cossacks, and 200 guns. At the end of April General Kuropatkin had at his disposal 100,000 men, exclusive of the 30,000 troops in garrison at Port Arthur, but he left another 30,000 at Vladivostok. He kept the bulk of his forces round Liao-yang, and threw forward two detachments to the Yalu and towards Ying-kou at the mouth of the Liao Ho.

Zasulich's detachment on the Yalu was scattered over the twenty-five miles of front which it had to guard: it could not be assembled in good time when the Japanese attacked with 50,000 men and won the battle of the Yalu, April 29 to May 1. This preliminary success of the Japanese had considerable moral effect. It corresponds to the action of Saalfeld in 1806, or of Wissemburg in 1870.

Kuroki's army extended its operations from Corea into Manchuria. It did not advance far, but confined itself to covering the disembarkation of Nodzu's Fourth Army west of the Yalu, and of the Second and Third Armies, under Oku and Nogi, in the Liaotung peninsula not far from Port Arthur. In the second half of May they were all ready to march. The Second Army moved northward, leaving the ground to Nogi, who proceeded to invest Port Arthur.

Resolved from the beginning not to fight till he had secured a numerical superiority over the Japanese, Kuropatkin had prepared all along the railway a series of fortifications surrounding each of the important points--Ta-shih-chiao, Hai-cheng, Liao-yang, and Mukden. Either of his own motion or else in

obedience to superior orders, he continued to leave two detachments in front of Kuroki and Oku, with instructions which it was almost impossible to carry out.

"I assign to the Southern Corps," he told Stackelberg, "the duty of drawing upon itself, by an offensive directed towards Port Arthur, as large a hostile force as possible, and thus weakening the enemy's army operating in Kuan-tung. In order to obtain this result, your movements against the screen which that army has set up north of it must be carried out swiftly and with determination, with the object of quickly crushing its advanced detachments, should they turn out not to be in strength. You are not to engage in any decisive action against superior forces, and on no occasion to go so far as to employ your whole reserve in any engagement so long as the situation is not thoroughly clear."

General Stackelberg, thus forbidden either to attack boldly or to remain on the defensive in preparation for future offensive movements, was beaten at Te-li-ssu (Wa-fang-kou) on June 14-15 by the superior forces of Oku, who then emerged from the narrow Liao-tung peninsula and advanced till he was level with Kuroki and Nodzu. The three Japanese armies were then deployed between the Yalu and the Liao Ho so as to cover the peninsula of Liao-tung. Their next task was to be a concentric movement upon Liao-yang.

At the end of June Kuroki seized the pass called Mo-tien Ling, a vital point on the road from the Yalu to Liao-yang which the Russians had not occupied in sufficient strength. Too late, they realised the

202 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

importance of the position, and tried in vain to retake it.

The Japanese did not resume the offensive until July 18; one of Kuroki's divisions then outflanked and dislodged from its position the division forming the extreme Russian left. On the 24th and 25th Oku drove two Russian army corps out of Ta-shih-chiao; a few days later he won another victory at Hai-cheng, while Kuroki once more by a flanking movement overcame new Russian defences in the mountains. The Japanese armies had now arrived in front of the advanced Russian positions round Liao-yang, and a fight began on two separate battle-fields, between one and the other of which it was possible for the Russians to play the game of the shuttle so as to secure on one wing a heavy superiority of force.

August 24 came before the Japanese attacked. As soon as Kuroki had turned his extreme right, on the 27th, Kuropatkin ordered retirement to a second position; this was effected on the 28th, and the struggle around the Russian main position began next day. It lasted three days longer, but on August 31 a threatening movement by Kuroki made Kuropatkin again decide on a retreat, which was begun on the day following, despite the fact that the Russians still had large reserves available and untouched. The worn-out Japanese did not pursue, and the Russians retired on the Sha Ho.

A month after the battle of Liao-yang, the Russians had received reinforcements that gave them a superiority in numbers, and General Kuropatkin tried to take the offensive against the Japanese, now

established along a line from Yen-tai to Pen-hsi-hu. He attacked at the last-named place in much superior force; but the Russians carried out their plan so faultily that they were repulsed on October 13, after fourteen days of fighting. Marshal Oyama, in his turn, took the offensive with his centre and left, and pushed the Russians back upon the Sha Ho on October 11-13, forcing their centre at the same time that he outflanked them on the west.

For the next four months the Russians were digging themselves in round Mukden. In January they sent General Mischenko with eighty squadrons and twenty-two guns to make a raid without any well-determined object, and later on they attempted to seize the village of Shen-tan-pu (or San-de-pu), west of the railroad; but though they made repeated attacks for four days (January 25-28, 1905), they failed.

IV. THE GREAT BATTLE

Immediately before the battle of Mukden the Russian forces, numbering 300,000 men, were divided into three armies, as follows:

On the right, the Second Army under General Kaulbars, including four army corps, and Rennen-kampf's composite corps made up of a Cossack division, a cavalry brigade, and an infantry brigade.

In the centre, the Third Army under General Bilderling, with three army corps.

On the left, the First Army under General Linievich, with four army corps.

Over and above these three armies, General Alexieff on the extreme left commanded an inde-

pendent detachment, which consisted of an infantry division and a Cossack division ; two small separate detachments were operating still farther east in the mountains. General Kuropatkin held in reserve one army corps, the Sixteenth ; he kept also at his disposal one army corps from the Second, a division from the Third, and a regiment from the First Army.

For a long time Kuropatkin had been fortifying the position where he intended to make his resistance ; but the works were originally undertaken to cover the city of Mukden, not to form a huge defensive battle front, and they had given a shape to the line of defence that was little suited to the new duties that it had to serve.

The line of the Russian trenches crossed the Hun Ho twenty-five miles south-west of Mukden, within rifle range of the Japanese outposts at Shen-tan-pu ; it then turned back north-eastward so as to meet the Sha Ho close to the railway, and passed up that stream, with a curve to the south-east, to near Pien-niu-lu-pu, where it left the river to run up into the mountains toward the north-east. A single glance at this long line on the map is enough to show how the western section was thrust arbitrarily forward towards the enemy, with its outer flank in the air. This portion of the position was doomed by the very nature of things very soon to fall.

Since the taking of Port Arthur the Japanese had five armies in the field. The First, under Kuroki, still formed the right advance : it included three regular divisions and three reserve brigades.

The Fourth Army, under Nodzu, lay in the centre,

and was made up of two regular divisions, one reserve division, and three reserve brigades, as well as an independent artillery brigade.

Oku's Second Army had three regular divisions, two reserve brigades, the Formosa corps, and a cavalry brigade.

Two more armies, the Third and the Fifth, had not yet come up into line, and the Russians did not know where they were. Kawamura's Fifth Army, with one regular and three reserve divisions, was marching northward through the mountains, ready to engage beyond Kuroki's right flank.

Nogi's Third Army, which was intended for the main attack, had to move to the extreme left so as to turn the Russian right; it was made up of three regular divisions, one reserve brigade, one independent artillery brigade, and a cavalry brigade.

In general reserve Marshal Oyama kept one regular division and three reserve brigades.

There were about 16,000 men to each Japanese division; so that the total Japanese strength was somewhere near to 325,000 men.

The Russian forces had been divided as follows :

The Army of the Right, with a strength of 110,000 men, held the part of the entrenchments which jutted forward as far as Shen-tan-pu. On a front twenty-two miles long it had 80,000 men, with about 30,000 in reserve nearly ten miles in rear of the right flank : there were thus in the first line rather more than two men to the yard, and very nearly three if we count in the reserve.

In the centre, on a front of less than ten miles, were

the 80,000 men of the Army of the Centre, and behind them the 30,000 of the general reserve; so that the corresponding proportions are either five or seven men to the yard.

To the east, among the mountains, the 100,000 men under Linievich, spread over about twenty-five miles of front, gave an average of two or two and a half men to the yard, which is equivalent to twice as many over the very limited sections where fighting was possible.

Thus the most important part of the position, whether for offence or defence, was decidedly the least strongly held—the unsupported salient, that is, in the plain on the right wing. The centre, which was naturally strong, was held in greatest strength.

(a) *The Japanese Demonstration in the East*

General Kuropatkin had meant to attack, but the Japanese were too quick for him. Marshal Oyama began operations by setting his extreme right in movement: on February 24 his Fifth Army appeared in the upper valley of the Tai-tzu Ho, nearly fifty miles east of Pen-hsi-hu, the village where Kuroki's right lay. General Kawamura, who was in command of the new force, moved on a line disposed diagonally to the front of the main armies, and directed his march on a point a dozen miles east of the extreme Russian left. On the road he met the detachments which General Kuropatkin had sent scouting on this wing, and easily dislodged them in the actions of February 24, 25, 27, 28, and March 1. By this last date the Japanese Fifth Army had outflanked the Russian left.

General Kuroki's army began to advance on February 26, and followed up Kawamura's movement by taking the offensive on the upper Sha Ho, while the army under General Nodzu proceeded to bombard the Russian centre without going forward to any serious attack.

Fearing to find his left turned, General Kuropatkin promptly sent reinforcements in this direction, including the First Siberian Corps, together with several regiments that had just detrained at Mukden, and Rennenkampf's detachment. The Siberians did not get as far as they were sent, as the rest of the reinforcements were enough to check Kawamura's force. One result of this mistaken movement was to mass all the Russian cavalry in the mountainous country on the left.

(b) *The Western Attack*

As early as February 26 Kuropatkin had received reports of Japanese forces moving up the Liao Ho, almost as far north as Liao-yang, but quite thirty miles farther west.

On the 28th this force—it was Nogi's army, coming up from Port Arthur—was level with Shentanpu; it then wheeled to the right to attack the Russians between the Hun Ho and the Liao Ho.

Nogi's attack was made on March 1, but a foundation for it was laid a day or two earlier by General Oku's offensive between the Hun Ho and the Sha Ho. Little by little, half of Oku's force crossed to the west bank of the Hun Ho to reinforce Nogi.

Meanwhile the Japanese cavalry, nearly forty miles outside the flank of the main army, kept pace with

the advance and reached Hsin-min-tun, so that they had now turned the Russian lines and the position of Mukden itself.

All through the engagement of March 1 the Russians held out at Chang-tan, their most advanced south-westerly position, on the right bank of the Hun Ho; but it was quite clear that the defence hereabouts could not avoid giving way before an enveloping attack, and that it was matter of urgency for the Russians to disentangle their right.

This same day (March 1) battle was joined all along the line, and there was fierce fighting in the centre as well as on both wings.

To parry the danger threatening his right, General Kuropatkin hurriedly improvised army corps out of units drawn from all his regular corps; but he made up for this by breaking up the one complete corps, the Sixteenth, that was at his disposal in Mukden.

One brigade of this he dispatched against the Japanese cavalry towards Hsin-min-tun, while the three remaining brigades, together with two others borrowed from the two divisions of another corps (the Tenth), moved down the right bank of the Hun Ho. Two more divisions taken from two other corps (the Fifth and Seventeenth) followed in support; and last of all, the First Siberian Corps, which had been moved eastward, and had already got twenty-five miles from Mukden, retraced its steps.

No more striking instance can be found of the kind of disorganisation which Napoleon regarded as the first result of a turning movement.

At the same time as he moved this patchwork army to the right bank of the Hun Ho, Kuropatkin

swung back his whole right wing so as to do away with the Chang-tan salient. On March 3 the Russian line, west of Sha-ho-pu, still rested on the Sha Ho, but now stretched from south to north for fifteen or sixteen miles; thus refused it covered Mukden, which lay distant about ten miles.

Actions continued on March 2 and 3, but neither side showed much ardour. The Russians were setting their new positions in order and establishing their heavy batteries, all undisturbed. In the centre, things were not less quiet. It seemed as if the Japanese were awaiting the effect of their turning movement with a view to a fresh and vigorous offensive later on.

(c) *The Turning Movement*

By nightfall on March 3 General Nogi had managed to extend his left past the end of the Russian line; he then made an enveloping attack on the Russian Twenty-fifth Division, which lay farthest out on this wing, and promptly pushed it back within a few thousand yards of the town of Mukden, close to the Tombs of the Emperors.

The Japanese had then on the right bank of the Hun Ho over 80,000 men against 60,000 Russians made up of fragments of several corps without a commander for the whole body. The outer flank of these Russians was quite in the air. Allowing for the passive attitude displayed by most of the Russian generals, it is not difficult to see what a chance General Nogi had, while still maintaining a fire fight along his front, to move the bulk of his brigades to

the left, so as to outflank the extreme Russian right further and further, until by degrees he reached the railroad north of Mukden.

General Kuropatkin planned a counter-attack for March 5, but the Japanese did not give him time to carry it out. Very early on that day they took the offensive with great energy all along their western front; their extreme left meanwhile extended as much as a dozen miles to the north-west of Mukden, quite three miles beyond the far Russian right.

Next day (March 6) General Nogi withdrew the bulk of his troops in order to push them still farther northward, so that the Russian counter-attack on that day was made with the conditions much in its favour; but the Russians hardly began their movement before eleven o'clock, carried it out with insufficient vigour, and failed entirely.

On the 7th the Japanese left reached the railway north of Mukden, so as to threaten the Russian retreat and line of communications, and Kuropatkin ordered a general retirement.

While the Japanese were turning the Russian right, there had been fierce fighting along the front. Formidable batteries, both of field and siege guns, had been collected by both sides on the banks of the Sha Ho between Feng-chi-pu and Lin-sheng-pu, and the country was seamed with trenches.

The Russians had taken special pains with the defences of two heights, called the Putiloff and Novgorod hills, and of the village of Sha-ho-pu. Against these three points all the Japanese attacks, whether by day or by night, broke down. The fighting was furious, and took place amid snowstorms and icy

cold. In a few places the assailants managed to get a footing in a piece of an advanced trench ; but they did so only by digging themselves in under fire from the defenders, and were never able to advance any farther. Very vigorous Russian counter-attacks had just as little success.

In the east General Kuroki attacked with great energy, and succeeded in breaking into the Russian advanced positions, while General Kawamura was able to seize several posts in the mountains ; but on the whole, these slight local gains did no more than round off the salients in the Russian line.

(d) *The Russian Retreat*

On the evening of March 7 General Kuropatkin gave orders for the evacuation of all the positions which he had thus far held, his intention being to establish his army along the Hun Ho. The execution of these orders began that night and next day.

As soon as they perceived that the Russians were retiring, the Japanese undertook a pursuit which was admirably directed and had very considerable results.

General Kuroki realised that if he marched straight ahead or bore to the right, no great results would be secured ; the extreme Russian left was too far off to be turned in time, and the whole Russian left wing lay in such mountainous country that it could easily delay pursuers. He accordingly closed in most of his troops to the left, and pressed the pursuit on this side with the utmost vigour.

In the mountains, the Russians retreated in good

order; General Rennenkampf's composite corps, in particular, reached its new position without being disturbed. The Russian left established itself on the Hun Ho, from Ying-pan to Fu-shun, and held its ground.

In the centre, General Bilderling's army, worn out by several days of fierce fighting, made a less orderly retreat; it was swept some distance beyond the river, and left only rearguards on its northern bank. This was exactly where General Kuroki made his chief effort. Following close on the heels of the Russians, he reached the Hun Ho on the evening of March 8, attacked at dawn on the 9th, drove the Russian rearguards out of positions which their main bodies might have held, and then, closing with the main columns of the enemy, pushed them back too. By evening on March 9 Kuroki's most advanced troops were nearly four miles north of the Hun Ho, and his army was thrust like a wedge between the retreating Russian columns. More serious still, it threatened to complete the envelopment of all those parts of the Russian armies that were fighting round Mukden and were already three-quarters surrounded by Generals Nodzu, Oku, and Nogi.

On this side, west of Mukden, Marshal Oyama had thrown his general reserve into the gap between Oku's and Nogi's armies, so as to allow the latter constantly to prolong his turning movement past Mukden.

At Mukden itself eight or nine Russian army corps were massed together and hemmed in on every side. Much crowded in the immediate neighbourhood of the town, and only able to escape by a narrow passage between Nogi's left and Nodzu's right, they

could not conform to the movement of the Russian centre and left. Kuropatkin had been hoping to halt his retiring armies on the Hun Ho and resume the struggle there; but Kuroki's vigorous pursuit gave him no time for this, and on March 9 he was obliged to direct his whole force to continue its retreat.

The Russians had to retire a good deal farther before they were able to rally; the order for retreat, issued on the evening of March 9, however, doomed the army corps left behind round Mukden. Next day they were completely surrounded, as soon as Kuroki's left joined up with Nogi between the railway and the Mandarin road, a dozen miles north of Mukden.

The remainder of the Russian armies went on retreating in disorder all through the night of March 9-10. On the 14th they halted and rallied at Tiehling; but the Japanese took up the pursuit once more, threatening to turn both the Russian flanks, and so the retreat was continued till March 22, under the command of General Linievich, who had superseded Kuropatkin.

It is not easy to ascertain the losses on either side in this long-drawn battle; probably the Japanese had from 40,000 to 50,000 men disabled, and the Russians 100,000 killed, wounded, or taken prisoners.

We have thought fit to give a very summary account of the battle of Mukden, as our principal object was to make clear its main features. These are hardly to be made out in more detailed narratives of the huge struggle, seeing that it was prolonged for a fortnight (from February 24 to March 10) over a space of fifty

214 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

miles, and that the reader is apt to lose himself among the unfamiliar place-names.

In continuation of this general sketch, a number of detailed studies might be attempted, on such points as follows :

The engagements in the mountains.

The attacks on posts ; the fighting formations of the infantry ; the duration of attacks.

The fight for the entrenched positions in the mountains ; the effect of the heavy artillery employed on both sides.

The manœuvres of the separate units of Nogi's army, and their encounters with the Russian detachments sent against them.

The cavalry operations, and so on.

Purely technical studies like these would fill a volume. We shall be content to point out generally some of the characteristic features of the campaign.

The Russians have been blamed for an over-extension of their front ; we shall confine ourselves to noting that events would have justified this criticism if the front had anywhere been broken ; but it is strictly true that it was never broken at any point, even where it presented great salients as it did by Pien-niu-lu-pu or Sha-ho-pu. The case is therefore ill chosen for condemning over-extension. On the contrary, one of the plainest reasons for the Russian defeat is that too many troops were told off at first to defend the front, and too few remained available to oppose the Japanese turning movement on the west.

To all appearance the most decisive cause of defeat was that General Kuropatkin, whenever he had a

fancy for attacking, failed to throw *himself heart* and soul into his attack. We have tried to show this by quoting his orders to General Stackelberg before Te-li-ssu. He never gave orders for an attack without confusing them with a number of restrictions and suggestions proper for a scheme of defence ; he spurred his horse and reined it in at the same time, and ended by using the reins more than the spurs. He was unwilling to risk his whole force in an attack, and over-anxious about every section of his front and lines of communication.

This unfavourable criticism of Kuropatkin's offensive methods applies also to his defensive operations, for quite as firm and clear a will is needed for the preparation and conduct of the defence of a position as for an attack.

General Kuropatkin did not understand how to distribute his forces for the defensive, with strong, well-grouped general and sectional reserves ready for a counter-attack, any more than he knew how to hurl all his troops impetuously into an attack. His excessive anxiety led him to put too many troops in his first line to begin with and to keep too few in hand. Afterwards as the action proceeded he was compelled to withdraw from this point and that along his front troops which turned out to be needless where they were, and to send them, either in successive dribblets or in masses without cohesion, against the well-planned and concerted hostile attacks.

We may notice, too, how the operations were influenced by the political importance wrongly attached to Mukden. In order to keep the enemy everywhere at a distance from that city the lines of

defence were pushed out of their proper shape, so as to include projecting points that could never be held, instead of being laid out with a view to a desperate resistance and therefore having their flanks resting on serious obstacles. The cause of the premature retreats of the first days and of the tardy retreats at the end was the mistake of supposing that the possession or loss of Mukden was all-important.

In conclusion, we would emphasise this point, that perhaps no battle more clearly proves how effective turning or outflanking movements are, and what kind of results they secure. It was by ever aiming at enveloping him that the Japanese won the victory over an enemy who was stronger than they were; and if the Russians failed to repulse Nogi's flank attacks, the reason largely was that the detachments which they sent against him always made their counter-attacks on his front, instead of trying to gain his unprotected flank.

During the pursuit, on the other hand, only a direct blow avails to outstrip the enemy, and secures the fullest return.

After Mukden, hostilities were suspended. The Japanese had nothing more to gain, while the Russians felt that without good generals victory was impossible, no matter how good or numerous their soldiers. Accordingly they left the Japanese with the honour of having vanquished a European Power. Only the future can show what should be thought about the Yellow Peril.

LULE BURGAS¹

(1912)

1. THE OPENING

BULGARIA and her allies declared war upon Turkey on October 18, 1912; their mobilisation, for which orders had been given on September 30, was then complete. The Turkish army, not yet fully mobilised, was concentrating quite close to the frontier. The Army of Thrace, made up of four corps, had its front along the line Adrianople--Kirk Kilissa, one march from the Bulgarian border; the Army of Macedonia in three detachments, at Uskub, Scutari, and Janina, was from one to two marches distant from the frontiers of Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece. Thus the Turks were attacked on all sides before they had concentrated their forces and organised their army services. On the Thracian frontier, the Turkish post of Mustafa Pasha was attacked and taken by the Bulgarians on October 19.

The value of the opposing armies at that time was very unequal. The Bulgarians had made great efforts to render all of their men who were liable to military service ready for war. Every year they had been carrying out army manœuvres with troops at war strength, so that the reserves had undergone very frequent periods of training. This detail of the Bul-

¹ See maps facing page 228.

garian preparations is most important; it will be found in the course of the war that reserve units were almost as useful as troops of the first line, and that both could be employed on the field of battle in exactly the same way. Discipline was perfect. The patriotic devotion displayed by every Bulgarian in this national struggle did not turn into excitement or disorder; the ardour which all showed in the offensive was consistent with perfect discipline. The seriousness and good sense that had long been recognised as characteristic of the Bulgarian temperament once more came out in the spirit of the soldiers who invaded Thrace.

The army services had been most thoroughly organised. In a country without roads and without horses, where the only railway is cut in two by the Turkish fortress of Adrianople, we shall find the Bulgarian armies always secure of their supplies. All the carts and all the oxen in the country had been requisitioned, so as to make sure of waggon trains enough to carry food and ammunition daily to points over 180 miles distant from the base furnished by the railway from Stara Zagora to Burgas. The care shown in the organisation of these services certainly powerfully influenced the Bulgarian successes, just as inadequate arrangements and provisions formed one of the essential causes of the Turkish defeats.

From end to end of Thrace there were no roads worthy of the name; such tracks as did exist were almost all unmetalled, and at the time of year when hostilities took place dreadful weather had rendered them impracticable. "There is not a road," says a German officer, "which would in Germany be thought passable for guns." Even these shocking

roads were exceedingly few in number, so few that we shall often find the columns obliged to march across country, horses and men knee-deep in the heavy clay. Such were the conditions in which the Turkish troops had to endure all manner of privations, in the unorganised state of their administrative services.

Most of the men that composed the Turkish army were not proof against privation and fatigue. They were without enthusiasm, without training, and without discipline. The first-line troops had proved over and over again, in 1877 and in 1897, how staunch and enduring they were; no one doubted that they retained the same good qualities in 1912; but they were swamped in a crowd of reservists. In the Third Corps, for example, one division was very largely made up of regulars, with a few battalions only of *redifs*, or soldiers of the reserve, but the two other divisions consisted almost wholly of these second-line troops.

The Turkish Government had imagined that it could apply the system of the Nation in Arms to the Ottoman Empire; but there was too great a lack of unity and of patriotic feeling, as well as of military training, for the *redif* battalions to be possessed of the slightest value. The soldiers called up from the Asiatic provinces were altogether indifferent to the struggle which they found going on in Europe. Besides that, they were uncivilised and destitute of military instruction or of the cadres and warlike material which they needed. "No discipline, inadequate equipment, no training, and bad officers; troops on the march looking more like tribes of

nomads on the move" is a German officer's description.

The first-line troops ought to have been kept separate from this mob so as to preserve their value undiminished ; but the numbers of the regulars, large enough in 1897 to fight the Greek army by itself, would have been too small against a coalition of the four Balkan powers.

The Turkish cavalry was rather more numerous than the Bulgarian, and of apparently excellent quality. It was provided with artillery and machine guns, and capable of doing good service. The Bulgarian cavalry was well mounted, but weak in numbers.

Neither side seems to have had any great advantage over the other in the weapons with which it was armed. Both used rifles with a calibre of just over three-tenths of an inch, high initial velocity, an effective range of over 2,000 yards, and clip loading. The Bulgarian field gun was of Creusot manufacture, nearly three inches in calibre, and a copy of the French gun. It had a brake which took up a great part of the shock of recoil, together with a mechanism to bring back the barrel to its original position after each round. The carriage remained rigidly fixed during action. This rigidity ensured the permanent alignment of the sights on any given point, either in front or in rear, so that indirect or masked fire was practicable. The gun also had a shield which protected the men serving it. The Turkish artillery used a corresponding gun, with a slightly larger shield, but a less rigid carriage. The Bulgarians also brought into the field a small number of heavy howitzers,

approximately 4·7 inches in calibre, firing a 44-pound shell.

The Turkish forces intended to operate in Thrace included four army corps, each of three divisions, and a strong cavalry division, of four brigades with three groups of horse artillery and six machine-gun companies. The four infantry corps concentrated east of the line Kirk Kilissa Havsa, with the fortress of Adrianople and the cavalry division in front of them. The Adrianople garrison was made up of three divisions, one of them withdrawn from the field army; the cavalry had some infantry supports. There was a projected organisation for four reserve corps; but these had not actually been formed.

The Bulgarian concentration, in readiness for war, was effected quite close to the frontier between the Black Sea and the river Maritsa, in three armies. The Second Army lay around Tirnovo on the Maritsa, and was intended to move upon Adrianople from the north-west; the First Army, at Kizilagach on the Tunja, was to march against Adrianople from the north-east, and also against the left wing of the hostile front on the line Adrianople - Kirk Kilissa. A Third Army, meant to attack Kirk Kilissa and to out-flank the Turkish right, had been concentrated farther to the left and in rear, between Karnobat and Jambol: it was covered by the First Army and the cavalry division, the latter extended along the frontier. It seems that the existence of this Third Army escaped the observation of the Turks. Farther west, in the Rhodope mountains, two detached

divisions held the country and made good the communications with the Greek and Serbian armies. One of these divisions was to advance later on from Philippopolis on Dede Agach, the other from Kustendil on Salonica.

A Bulgarian division was as strong in infantry as a French army corps, but only half as strong in guns and cavalry : it was not quite equal to a Turkish corps. Each of the Bulgarian armies contained three divisions ; one of the divisions of the Second Army was held back for a time at Philippopolis, in readiness to move to any desired point in the theatre of war. We shall find that it rejoined the army to which it belonged as soon as the detached Rhodope divisions and the armies of the allies had advanced far enough to relieve the Bulgarians of all anxiety about the west.

War was declared on October 18 ; on the 19th the Bulgarian armies invaded Turkey all along the line. The Army of the Maritsa (Second Army) seized the Turkish post of Mustafa Pasha ; the Army of the Tunja (First Army) overthrew a Turkish detachment ; and on the 22nd both these armies appeared in front of Adrianople, and the Third Army in front of Kirk Kilissa. The Turks had thrown forward detachments on the line Adrianople—Kirk Kilissa, and on this day there were fierce engagements between the advanced guards.

The Turkish plan was to let the Bulgarians through at first between Kirk Kilissa and Adrianople, and then to sally in great strength from Kirk Kilissa and push the enemy back upon the defences of Adrian-

ople. This involved a prolonged defensive, to begin with, by the army corps posted at Kirk Kilissa—the Third Corps, under Mukhtar Pasha. Two redoubts in front of the town, though their guns had lately been removed, might have given considerable support to this defensive. Just as he heard of the approach of the Bulgarians, Mukhtar received a sudden order to attack. At a short distance from Kirk Kilissa he met the advance guard of the Third Bulgarian Army, and was quickly obliged to resume the defensive. This was on October 22.

In front of Kirk Kilissa the ground is quite mountainous and easy to hold; for two days this single Turkish corps withstood the simultaneous frontal and flank attacks, on both left and right, of the whole Third Bulgarian Army. On the night of October 23 the weather was frightful, and the Bulgarians tried a night attack. A panic seized the scratch troops, of which Mukhtar's force was largely composed; the whole corps scattered, and left most of its material behind it on the roads. Meanwhile the Bulgarian night, after some successful fighting, proceeded to invest Adrianople.

II. THE FIGHT

After the fighting on October 22 and 23, the Turks retreated eastward. The Bulgarian armies had to make a great wheel round Kirk Kilissa in pursuit of them. The 11th division, a reserve unit, came up to reinforce the troops investing Adrianople; and the Third Army, with two divisions (the 1st and the 10th), soon to be reinforced by part of another (the

3rd), all belonging to the Second Army, were moved in an easterly direction.

It will be found that the Bulgarians had no pronounced advantage in numbers, and that they were much weaker than their adversaries in artillery: in all probability they had no more than 180 or 200 guns against 300 or 400.

On October 25 the Bulgarian cavalry advanced upon Baba Eski, and from there along the Constantinople road, with the object of discovering where the enemy's left had halted. On the 26th the Bulgarian front was up to the line Uskub—Haskeui; their left, that is to say, was twenty-five miles farther along the direct road to Constantinople than their right. Supposing that the enemy had been disposed to hold a line passing through Lule Burgas, it would have been reasonable to halt General Dimitrief's Third Army, on the left, for a couple of days; on the other hand, it would have been a pity not to take advantage of the unhappy condition of the Turkish right since its panic at Kirk Kilissa. This was why General Dimitrief waited no longer than October 27 before resuming the offensive.

On that day one of his advance guards reached Bunarhissar; next day it crossed the Karagach stream and made its way into the forest of Soghujak. Here it dashed against the advance guard of the Turkish Third Corps, which Mukhtar Pasha had rallied, and was once more pushing to the front. The remainder of the Bulgarian Third Army was not destined to reach points level with Bunarhissar till one day later (October 29), and the troops of the First Army, in spite of tremendous efforts, did not

all appear in the neighbourhood of Lule Burgas even on October 30.

The banks of the Karagach were the scene of the encounters between Turks and Bulgarians that began on October 28. The Turks, after concentrating a little farther east, once more advanced, and in the course of the 29th reached the stream at the following points :

Third Corps opposite Bunarhissar.

Second Corps at Karagach.

First Corps at Turkbey.

Fourth Corps (less one regular division detached to Constantinople) at Lule Burgas.

The Cavalry Division lay a little farther south, on the river Ergene.

Headquarters of the commander-in-chief, Abdullah Pasha, were at Satikeui, about eight miles in rear of Lule Burgas. Here the Pasha was centrally placed with regard to his army, but he had no proper means of communication with its different units, and his inability to direct the fighting will soon be plain. The orders which he had given were for the left to stand fast on the line of the Karagach, and for the right to attack and throw back the enemy to the south-west.

The Bulgarians, on their side, made a wheel forward, or rather a diagonal march with their left in advance. One division of the Third Army had already succeeded in putting its advance guard across the stream on the 28th; it was not till the following day that the divisions next in the line appeared on the scene, and one more day before the

226 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

First Army, in the direction of Lule Burgas, got into action.

The division that formed the Bulgarian left had instructions "to hold the enemy and stay on the defensive until the other divisions came into line." Only a part of it had crossed the stream on the 28th and gone into action in the forest of Soghujak, where it met Turkish forces much superior to itself. When this situation became clear, the force retired, took up a position on the right bank, and held it against all attacks during the days that followed.

In the afternoon of the 29th the other two divisions of the Third Army came up into line to the right and attacked the Second and First Turkish Corps near Karagach and Turkbey. All through the night of the 29th and the following day the battle raged without a break. The Bulgarian artillery, as it was relatively weak and found little cover close to the banks of the stream, had been obliged to take up scattered positions a long way off from the Turkish batteries; its fire was incapable of crushing the enemy. The infantry dug itself in, and bore the brunt of the fighting.

On the 30th one division of the First Army arrived in front of Lule Burgas, which it attacked and took in the afternoon; in the evening it was turned out by a Turkish counter-attack. Two more divisions were due to come up next day on either wing to north and south; one of them, on the north, was destined to parry a flanking movement of the Turkish right, while the other, on the south, ultimately decided the day by outflanking the Turkish left.

As they were unable to master the enemy with

their fire, the Bulgarians had recourse to night attacks as they had done at Kirk Kilissa. One brigade crossed the stream near Turkbey, threw itself into a little wood east of that village, and drove out the enemy with the bayonet, without firing a shot. In this position, with the help of a few guns brought up to support it, it resisted all the attempts of the Turkish Corps.

On the morning of the 31st the Bulgarians retook Lule Burgas, and this time remained masters of the place; but neither here nor at Turkbey were they able to advance and break into the Turkish main position. It was by flank attacks on both wings, made this same day, that they won the victory. Two divisions from the force besieging Adrianople came up, the 10th on the right, and the 3rd on the left, and outflanked either wing of the Turkish Army. The 10th division moved south of the river Ergene and dislodged the cavalry posted there. The guns of the division took all the artillery of the Turkish Fourth Corps in flank, and the whole Turkish left retreated in disorder on Chorlu, though the right held firm.

To break down its resistance, General Dimitrief took his last available brigade and hurled it against the village of Karagach in an attack urged with the utmost vigour. The Turks had to give way, and the left of the united Second and Third Corps retreated to the edge of the forest.

On November 1 General Dimitrief pressed the enemy furiously, and at the same time the 3rd division from Adrianople reached the northern edge of the forest. The Turks were driven back on all sides into the wood. Here they offered a desperate resistance,

and even attempted several counter-attacks ; but a regular massacre of them followed, and the wreck of the Third Turkish Corps had great difficulty in making good its retreat, in the night of November 1, to Vize.

It seems that in the five days of fighting on the Karagach the Turks lost about 30,000 men, the Bulgarians 15,000. "The struggle had been so severe that, owing to fatigue and shortness of ammunition,"¹ the Bulgarian commanders were obliged to order a halt for three days. It is easy to understand the worn-out state of the Bulgarian troops if we think what immense difficulties of ground their energy alone had surmounted, and if we remember that they were possibly fewer, and certainly weaker in artillery, than their opponents.

On November 6 the Bulgarians resumed their advance eastward ; on the 12th they came up against the formidable lines of Chatalja. Here bravery and skill were no longer of avail. Heights with their approaches quite bare, so as to afford an extensive field of fire, the two flanks resting on the sea and covered by lagoons, all the highest points held by permanent fortifications, such were the lines of Chatalja—a position that needed for its reduction many heavy guns, unless the garrison lost all heart.

¹ Penemrun, p. 96.

THE BATTLE OF THE FUTURE

THERE is a battle for which we are all waiting, the only one about which we have all been thinking since we reached the age of manhood, and the only one that never comes. And, while our studies and our training are carried on with an eye to this ideal battle, other conflicts break out unexpectedly in all parts of the world. There is fighting in the Transvaal, in Manchuria, and in Macedonia, and war there assumes forms appreciably different from those which we imagine for the battle of the Vesle, of Morhange, or of the Woèvre.

We know this and we do not imagine the long-looked-for battle in the likeness of Colenso or of Mukden; yet these battles enable us, before we picture to ourselves the characteristic features of a battle in the Vosges or in the Ardennes, to determine some of the traits of the battles of the next war, in whatever country they may take place, by comparison with those of the past.

All the battles that have been fought for a quarter of a century have an appearance and a character which will be reproduced for at least half a century to come, however important may be the improvement of weapons during that period. In all of them the combatants attained to a degree of

¹ See map on page 267.

dispersion and of concealment which for a long time it will not be easy to surpass, and battlefields will offer the same aspect as in the last three wars.

There are moreover, in battle as in war in general, a good many elements and a good many principles, even a good many forms, which time and the ground do not modify. In going through the series of great battles which we have described, certain analogies can be recognised and certain phenomena observed which repeat themselves in all ages. Others may be noticed of which the development is so clearly marked that we easily divine what they will become in the near future.

I. THE FIGHT IN DETAIL

There have always been skirmishers; the peculiarity of modern fighting is that there are no longer anything but skirmishers on the ground where the fighting takes place. This holds good not of the infantry only, for the artillery too fights in dispersed order.

A skirmisher is a soldier who has the physical and moral freedom needed to make the best possible use of his weapon, in contradistinction to the soldier in the ranks, whose neighbours cramp his movements and also elate or depress him.

The conditions in which a combatant must be placed to make him a good skirmisher are independent of the efficacy of the weapons. In all ages, in the armies of Alexander as in those of Turenne, in the days of Montluc's arquebusiers as of the light infantry of the First Empire, we find the skirmishers dispersed

with wide intervals and grouping themselves of their own accord at the points where they can make the best use of their weapons.

In the future as in the past skirmishers will fight in small groups with wide intervals.

Whether to shelter himself or to find the most convenient position for shooting effectively, the skirmisher, to-day more than ever, adapts himself to the ground. The group does the same: at one moment it makes for the direction along which it can move forward under cover, at another for the points from which it can bring to bear a specially effective fire on the groups of the enemy which its bullets will strike either in front or obliquely. Those units which include several groups, the section and the company, are equally interested in studying the ground and adapting themselves to it; but in their case this adaptation begins to be of a higher order involving combinations of movements and of fire.

As larger units are reached there is still more need for combinations and for imagination in the use of the ground. A skilful chief detects the points where the modern weapon well employed will yield the greatest results; where a handful of men can play an important part; he picks out, too, those zones where superior numbers can make themselves felt. The past offers few instances of dispositions well thought out upon the basis of the power of fire. Yet there have been such cases in defence: that of Wellington at Waterloo is admirable at all points. In practice until now generals have expended little of their imagination and of their intelligence in making the most of the ground and of fire, their attention

having been devoted mainly to the general form of their manœuvres.

But it is quite clear that in future a chief who should give the care which it deserves to the utilisation of the various kinds of fire and to their combination would obtain great successes. The power of modern weapons opens in this department an almost boundless field.

Much is said of obtaining superiority of fire, but it cannot be obtained so long as we are content to oppose one line to another; by combinations, by well-placed groups, by cross-fire directed against important points, by oblique and enfilade fire, superiority by means of fire may perhaps be acquired.

What is true of infantry is truer still of artillery; since the invention of quick-firing guns and of indirect laying, the guns, like the infantry, hide themselves; they take dispersed order, the batteries adapting themselves to the ground.

The guns of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, few in number, were placed side by side; in the great batteries of Napoleon the intervals between gun and gun were small. In our days the interval between the guns of a battery is infinitely variable, but pains are taken not to reduce it below 20 or 25 yards; the batteries are not placed on one and the same line, but separated from one another at varying distances from the mask which conceals them; it is thought better to place them in two lines than to arrange them regularly, which would give the aeroplanes an easy means of marking them down. Thus irregularly disposed, the guns seem to the aerial observer, if he can distinguish them, to be scattered here and there over the

ground; they are in fact in dispersed order like skirmishers.

This appearance of dispersal is increased if we consider the isolated guns or machine guns, posted behind a hedge, a wood, or a bank, to sweep some road or path that matters or to aim diagonally along a line of infantry. Thanks to rapid firing, a solitary gun can find its range and do good execution, and use will sometimes be made of this valuable capacity.

If it is advantageous to combine the fire of groups of infantry it is far more advantageous and much easier to combine the fire of batteries. As our field guns shoot with accuracy at more than 6,500 yards we shall very often obtain a cross-fire upon targets lying 3,000 or 4,000 yards from our front, and this converging fire will be more essential than in the case of infantry. It will permit of our sweeping the reverse slope of a height of which the flanks fall away; it will strike the personnel of the enemy's batteries who are effectually covered against direct fire by the shields.

Thus, on the battlefields of the near future we shall see groups of skirmishers, machine guns, and batteries scattered all over the ground, adapting themselves to it and making the most of its smallest irregularities. Each set, large or small, will seek pathways to the places where it can find shelter and also to the points from which the best view can be had, the posts of observation, and the points from which to fire.

This adaptation to the ground will henceforth be the principal business of every one, from the private soldier to the commander-in-chief. Undoubtedly in

the past the ground played a great part, but in a far-away past only the commander-in-chief had to study and to make use of it. In the nineteenth century the generals commanding divisions and brigades, and occasionally the colonels and the battalion commanders, had to think about it. Henceforth all movements and all dispositions will be enjoined by the ground, not by the formations of the drill books.

The soldier needs something more than the discipline of close order; it is no longer a question of troops manœuvring so that a large body moves as one man; once in dispersed order, which has the appearance of disorder, they must operate according to the intentions indicated by their leader and must make the best of all the advantages offered by the ground in order to obtain the results required.

We shall need a great deal of discipline, of cohesion, and of intelligence; we must appeal and appeal strongly to the instincts of the primitive man. It is not merely to creep or to jump, to hide or to lie in wait, that we must return to the usages of primitive life; in the war of to-morrow every ruse of the past will find its place again; woods will move as they did against Macbeth, hedges will spring up where there were none, devices such as dummy figures and sham guns will have their part to play.

Side by side with tricks which, though childish, are infinitely useful, the most scientific devices of fortification will of course retain their importance. With the rifles and the machine guns of to-day a defensive position is extremely strong and can be held almost indefinitely by a very small number of men sheltered

by deep and well-masked trenches, served by communications in which the men can be completely concealed.

Even in the offensive it is seldom possible to carry on an attack to the end without at certain moments digging shelters or trenches. The Japanese in Manchuria delivered attacks as vigorous as can be desired, but they almost always found themselves obliged to dig the ground if only to establish themselves at charging distance in front of the enemy's lines. Stories were told of the Bulgarians in Thrace charging incessantly as fast as they could go, but their ardour did not enable them to dispense with the spade; a few days after the battle of Lule Burgas hasty shelter trenches outlined the ground of their attacks.

On the battlefields of the future a great deal of earth will be moved, a great many trees will be cut down to make obstacles, a great deal of barbed wire will be unrolled.

The observer who from an aeroplane or a dirigible looks down on a battlefield will find it hard to catch sight of the combatants, some of them crowded in the coverts and others scattered in the fields so as to be scarcely perceptible. And yet they will be keeping up a hellish fire, sweeping with bullets belts of ground on to which they will not risk themselves without a thousand precautions, and shooting off millions of cartridges to strike down a few victims (at Mukden in twelve days one man out of ten was hit).

For an observer who has not an aeroplane or balloon at his disposal the spectacle will be still more remarkable. He will hear the roar of the guns,

the rattle of the rifles, the perpetual whistling of the bullets, and yet as often as not will see nothing at all. At long intervals he will hear shouting ; a line of infantry formed at charging distance from the enemy thinks the moment come for its rush ; then it will be seen to hurl itself forward, and for a short time the fight will come to life and become visible.

II. GETTING INTO TOUCH

The duration of a battle has increased as well as the area which it covers. Whereas in ancient times and right down to the eighteenth century two opposing armies came within sight of one another before determining upon battle, and then, moving each as a whole, at once revealed their strength and their position, modern armies come into touch with one another gradually and not without difficulty. The reconnoitring cavalry have been fired at but have seen no one ; they have been able to make known only the course of a line which they were unable to cross, but not the distance behind that line at which the enemy's main body may be. They have had in front of them not regular outposts, but chains of patrols or of irregular posts furnished sometimes by the advance guards, sometimes by detachments sent on a long way in front of the main body, sometimes even by insignificant units with nothing behind them.

To get to know more about the enemy it is necessary to penetrate this curtain. But small parties will not often succeed in doing so : the enemy will have a word to say to them. With modern weapons, a battalion which attempts alone to break through

the enemy's screen at a given point will be stopped by one company well posted and having other troops on its right and left. More assailants will be needed, a regiment or a brigade and guns the equivalent to the advance guard of a large column, whose presence will give the enemy more information than it is likely to obtain about him.

Throughout the zone in which the commander-in-chief has ordered the offensive the troops will march towards the enemy in many columns, each preceded by its advance guard. To get to know anything of importance about the enemy these advance guards must be engaged. Some of them will have no difficulty in breaking through the curtain which stopped the reconnoitring parties and the small detachments ; the others will strike upon an enemy strong enough to resist them. It is essential that the intervals between the several advance guards, and the distance of their main bodies behind them, should be small enough to prevent any one advance guard being liable to be caught in isolation and crushed.

In the future as in the past, the management of the fight of an advance guard will be a delicate business. The desire to lay down concise regulations for an advance guard has sometimes produced an excess of rashness, more usually a still more deplorable excess of timidity. Often enough, when instances are quoted from military history, the interpretation of them is wrong. It can never be the duty of an advance-guard commander to start an attack on his own account when the main body of the column is halted ; but once the column is marching towards the enemy, and is therefore intended to attack him,

it cannot be right for the advance-guard commander to put the brake on this attack without fresh instructions from the commander of the column. The instance to be quoted to inspire an advance-guard commander with the spirit of the offensive is not that of Von der Goltz at Borny, but that of Gudin at Auerstedt.

The general is not likely to have determined to march against the enemy without knowing what he is doing. Clearly, therefore, so long as the column is advancing and is meant to attack, the task of the advance guard is bound to be to attack. The mere fact of meeting the enemy ought not to stop the advance guard of a column, for it is just this meeting that the general wanted. The advance guard, therefore, must attack, must strike as hard as it can against whatever enemy is in front of it. The mistake which an advance-guard commander is most likely to have to regret is not having been bold enough at the first touch, even though the regulations most commonly suggest to him an attitude of defence. That attitude is out of place except when the enemy has been found so strong that he cannot be made to budge before the main body of the column has come into action. Then the commander of the whole column takes over the management of the fight and makes use of the advance guard to cover the deployment of his main body, especially of his artillery. The action of the IXth Prussian army corps at Vernéville during the battle of Gravelotte is an example of what not to do in this situation.

The advance guards of former days, which discovered an entire army before firing a shot, were not

obliged, as those of the future will be, to begin an engagement in order to get to know how much of the enemy's force was in front of them. As soon as they came into the presence of superior forces they were aware of the fact and avoided an engagement. In future the advance guards of columns marching towards the enemy will find it the more necessary to attack because they will be less well informed.

The general's instinct will enlighten him more than all the information contained in the reports which he receives.

"A general," said Napoleon, "never knows anything for certain, never clearly sees his enemy, never knows exactly where he is. It is by the mind's eye, by the unity of his whole calculation, by a kind of inspiration, that a general sees, knows, and judges."

What began to be true in Napoleon's time will become more and more true in proportion as armies become stronger and the combatants more scattered and better concealed.

To feel for the enemy, to reconnoitre, to ascertain where he is and where he is not, small means no longer suffice; recourse must be had to the procedure defined by Bugeaud: "reconnoitring an army with an army."

It is therefore more needful than it was for a commander to have made up his mind beforehand what he means to do, and, if he is determined to take the offensive, to attack boldly without any mental reservations. At one plunge he must get into touch with the enemy. But even if you press on into contact you lose a great deal of time. No doubt a prudent advance of reconnoitring bodies takes time

and makes the operations slow, but they are at least as much delayed by marches across country, by needless deployments, by attacks upon insignificant bodies of the enemy, by the concentration of troops against positions which there is scarcely any one to defend.

Whatever the methods employed, the periods of groping will be long. There will be half-hearted reconnaissances and blows struck in the air; these preliminaries consume a great deal of time.

While his advance guard is fighting, the commander of a column will be watching and will decide on his course so far as it depends upon himself, and will inform the commander above him. According to the nature of the instructions previously received, to the events of the fight, and to the new orders received, if there are any, each column will carry on its attack, will halt to defend itself where it is, or will fall back.

There is no contradiction between the possibility of such a change of attitude and the determination to attack which caused the advance guards to engage the enemy. An entire army, for instance, may be moving as a whole towards the enemy without precise knowledge of the line upon which he will be met or even of the general direction of that line. If one of its columns comes into touch with the enemy before the others it may then be appropriate for that column to wait before committing itself to an attack until all the other columns have come up level with it. The Bulgarian army offered an instance of this at the beginning of the battle of Lule Burgas. Whatever may be the decision of the column commander,

by the time he has made up his mind his advance guard will be fighting, and it will be impossible to break off the fight before dark. He must therefore, of necessity, take all the measures required for holding on until the evening and must not let his advance guard be crushed by superior forces.

If, as will usually be the case, the course most appropriate to the situation is to keep to the determination to attack, the advance guard's fight will gradually expand into a fight of the main body, which will commit itself to the attack.

If the attacking advance guards have made sure that they are striking upon a strong defensive position their procedure will become more methodical. They will invest all the points held by the enemy, will clear the approaches to his main position, and will seize, without too much concentration, the points which the enemy holds in front of it. If the enemy should seem not to be in position but to be determined on his side also to attack, the advance guards will act vigorously so as to bring on the encounter in favourable conditions. There will be a transition little by little to a battle properly so called, for which the commanders of the larger units will have made their plans during the preparatory phase that has just ended.

III. ATTACK AND DEFENCE OF A POSITION

The first consideration that will determine the choice of a position will almost always be the extent of its field of fire. There are some positions of such command that troops cannot come as near to them as

four miles, the effective range of field guns, without being completely exposed. Skirmishers could move forward towards them, but guns could not possibly come into action during the day; in such cases the night time must be used to dig shelters for the guns and to bring the guns into them; the supply of ammunition will present serious difficulties. Before undertaking the attack of a strong or well-prepared position, the assailant will have to give time to its reconnaissance, to consider carefully every step to be taken, and to gain ground inch by inch. The methods will hardly be distinguishable from those of siege warfare.

Neither the assailant nor the defender will content himself, in such a case, with ordinary field guns. They will use long-range guns and mortars or howitzers of large calibre.

Long-range guns will allow the defender to take advantage of the full distance to which he can see the ground across which any attack must pass. They will compel the assailant to put his troops into fighting formations and to multiply his precautions while he is yet six miles away.

The assailant will find long-range guns to be the only weapons with which in the first stages of the encounter he can give counter-strokes to the defender's artillery.

The mode in which the two artilleries may engage is a subject of endless discussion. One school would tempt the enemy by the bait of a battery; which, firing against his infantry, would draw on itself the fire of a large number of his guns; these would then become the targets of a heavier counter-fire, and thus

step by step the conflict would be engaged. Another school would prefer to wait till everything was ready, and all the guns in line, to open fire with all the batteries at once. The next war will reconcile these two schools: the advance guards will engage their batteries one after another in order to tear the curtain which veils the defender and to carry his first advanced posts; these batteries will be able to open fire without running great risks because, as they will be masked and scattered with large intervals between them, they will be hard to hit. The artillery of the main body will be brought into position out of sight and so as to open fire as nearly as possible all at the same moment. Aerial reconnaissance will sometimes discover the enemy's artillery behind its masks; very often the only information obtainable will consist of vague inferences from the course of the fight and from the intensity of the fire. The line held in force by the enemy's infantry will indicate the general position of his artillery with certainty enough for a counter-bombardment.

We must not expect in the first instance to have accurate data concerning the positions of the enemy's artillery; to postpone the attempt at counter-bombardment until precise knowledge of the positions of the enemy's batteries had been obtained would be for the artillery which made the experiment to court destruction.

This account of the conditions in which it is advisable to open fire may seem like advising the artillery to aim at the unknown. In practice, this is far from being the case: the infantry strikes on the enemy's

infantry along a series of natural borders where the resistance offered is serious; behind these strong points there rises in front of the assailant a line of heights, a "crest"; it is, beyond doubt, behind this crest that the batteries which are firing on him are posted, and the first thing to be done is to bombard the other side of this crest. Little by little, as the assailant is forced to study the ground held by the enemy, he will find in it particular emplacements, clearings or folds of the ground, in which the enemy has batteries; the aeroplanes will furnish information that will supplement his examination; but, after all, he must open fire without waiting for accurate data, and make his bombardment sweep large areas.

The struggle engaged in these conditions will last a long time; it will not end, in the future any more than in the past, in the complete ruin of the artillery of one side. But it will put a part of it out of action. When one of the two adversaries has no longer more than a part of his batteries available; when these, so long as they remain within the zones swept by shells, find it increasingly difficult to bring up their ammunition and to change position—very often they will no longer be able to bring up either ammunition or limbers—the infantry of the other side will find bands of ground over which no fire prevents its advance, and where it can be effectually supported by its own artillery.

This artillery, concentrating its fire now on one point and now on another, will enable the attacking infantry to wear down all the salient points of the defender's line, one after another.

But the resources of the defence will not yet be

exhausted, and its artillery, however weakened it may have been, will be reorganised during the night, its supply of ammunition renewed, and its emplacements changed. For several days more the assailant will still find insurmountable obstacles in the way of his effort finally to dislodge the defender from a part of his position.

Night attacks have become usual during the last wars; but they can be undertaken only after other fights, when the assailant has at last got to know in detail the ground over which his attacks must be carried, and when the defender is worn out. The night attacks undertaken by the Japanese and by the Bulgarians almost all succeeded, but they were attempted in the conditions just described.

We may infer that night attacks will procure only very limited success, and will not suffice to bring about a general victory.

In the future as in the past, success will be obtained almost always by an attack upon one of the enemy's wings, either in consequence of a wide-sweeping turning movement or of a movement to overlap and outflank the defence. We shall have occasion to return to this normal form of victory.

Success obtained by an attack upon the enemy's front, without a movement to turn or overlap him, is an exception. It is not enough even to be a Napoleon to be able to pierce the centre of the enemy's lines as at Austerlitz; there must be a considerable gap in the enemy's order of battle.

This particular case seldom occurred in the past, and will seldom occur in the future. Yet it may be admitted as a possibility that one of the points held

by the defence may be given up after a brief resistance because the defender there will be short of men ; it will be much harder than of old to foresee and to take advantage of a rupture of this kind.

During the course of a battle, while the attacks are being delivered, one of them at one point will perhaps suddenly be seen to be successful. The assailant will often be too much surprised to make the most of it ; he will not have at hand, close to the critical point, the reserves needed to take advantage of his first success. As we have seen in the case of the Sha-Ho, a local success of this kind, obtained early in the battle, cannot be easily worked up to the point of becoming a general victory. The victory is won at the points where it has been prepared, and where the means have been collected for making very great efforts.

Not that it is impracticable to design and carry through an attack against the defender's front ; but this can be done only by making the most of the inevitable exhaustion of the combatants. In the wars of the future there will undoubtedly be cases when it will not be possible to turn or to overlap a wing. There will then be no other resource than to pierce the enemy's front, and that will assuredly not be accomplished except by wearing him out.

The power of guns and of rifles allows of holding out in a defensive position with very slender numbers ; a position held by two men per yard will not be carried by troops of the same quality, even though five times as numerous. But after two days of conflict the spirits of the combatants are used up ; if there comes a moment when the defender can no

longer reinforce his battalions engaged in the first line, fresh troops brought up by the assailant may be able to get the better of them.

Of course if the defender's troops are of bad quality, if they lack enthusiasm, military training, or discipline, they will give way after a much shorter time. This is what seems to have happened in the Turkish army, at Kirk-Kilissa and at Lule Burgas.

An attack carried out against the front, and succeeding in this way, thanks to the exhaustion of the defenders, may lead to two very different results: the breaking of the front at one point or the retreat of the enemy's whole line. The assailant will always seek, by an accumulation of forces, to produce the kind of breach which allows him to intercept large portions of the enemy's troops on their line of retreat, to withdraw them from the control of their commander-in-chief, to take them in flank, to push them out of the way and to scatter them.

We must make our minds quite clear about the means by which, in future, the success of a central attack can be brought about. We must not count, in normal conditions, upon succeeding the first day, when the spirits of the defenders will not yet have been shaken; but from the beginning their demoralisation must be hastened by the most powerful material means. We must be thoroughly convinced that, among these means, masses of men count for very little. Along the front the number of men who can be used with advantage is limited; it adds no strength to the attack to pile up food for cannon behind the skirmishers who are the actual fighters. What counts is the mass of projectiles, of bullets or

shells. Up to the moment when a gap has been made in the enemy's line, it is not men but projectiles that must be thrown at him. What must be heaped up in the region where the enemy is to be broken through are guns, guns of all kinds large and small, field guns that rain bullets, as well as heavy guns which make great gulfs in the ground, which smash up the shelters, and the obstacles that protect them, which deafen the adversary, which paralyse his heart and his head, producing complete demoralisation. All-important are arrangements to secure the uninterrupted flow of ammunition to the scene of the attack.

Upon one point history is conclusive: a gap has never been made by masses of men; all attempts to break through the enemy with deep columns have always failed, from Leuctra to Waterloo. Whenever an attack on the centre has succeeded in eviscerating an army, as at Marignano, at Pavia, at Friedland, it has been by guns. Formerly this result was attained against troops in dense formations by a comparatively small number of guns and projectiles. To-day, in order to work destruction upon thin lines and upon batteries masked and scattered, it will be needful to let loose a veritable hell upon the position. That is the means, which may not always suffice, but will always be needed for success.

We have devoted ourselves hitherto to the operations of the assailant. As for the defender, we have as yet referred only to his preparatory dispositions. During the course of the battle he must above all be on his guard against the physical, spiritual, and

intellectual inertia which is only too often the consequence of a defensive attitude. The worst that can be said of defence is that it tends to inaction. An energetic defence cannot be anything but active and skilful. In this regard Wellington's conduct at Waterloo is a model : never ceasing to look out for opportunities not merely to launch counter-attacks, but also to devise new dispositions, limiting the scope of charges when that was needful, pushing them home when they promised great results, he may be said to have neglected no advantage which he could possibly gain and to have incurred no useless risk.¹

In future the mechanism of the counter-attack will be more difficult than in the past. It will no longer be troops in close formation that can be sent forward by a wave of the hand against plainly visible masses, but thin lines which will be set in motion to sweep back similar lines by their fire before being able to charge them.

It seems likely that here, as in all else, the scale has greatly increased. The positions to defend will be much more extensive than formerly, the counter-attacks more spacious, and of a very different kind. It will not be a question simply of charging the enemy's troops along a line of a few hundred yards ; it will be necessary to deliver serious attacks to make sure that the assailant is in force, and that the defensive position fulfils its purpose of keeping superior forces before it. The counter-attacks must be carried, to-day as in days gone by, to the extreme range of artillery, and this constant condition gives a different

¹ In our summary account of this battle it was impossible to say everything. The reader is referred to the work of Colonel James.

character to an active defence in proportion as the range of artillery increases.

Even if the defender is reduced to immobility by an intense fire, he is not on that account beaten. The Russians showed on the Sha Ho and at Mukden that they could keep their ground under a hurricane of projectiles. When the defence can no longer relieve its first line by fresh troops, so that retreat seems inevitable, its commander as a rule will try to avoid that rupture of his front which leads to the worst disasters. . He will then have to face the terrible question of the best time to retreat, neither too soon nor too late, and of the sacrifice which he must consent to make in order that the assailant's charge may find empty the position which it expected to be still held, and may result in a disorder which will delay the pursuit.

The case must also be foreseen in which the assailant is compelled to loose his hold and in which the parts are exchanged, and the defender leaves his position to attack and to pursue. This passage from the defensive to the offensive was even in the old days a delicate operation ; but it could be conducted with vigour, as was seen at Waterloo. In future, it seems likely that a return to the offensive will involve a certain delay. The stronger the positions, the harder it will be to advance out of them except at especially favourable moments ; it is still more trying to go down a smooth slope under fire than to go up it, and it will scarcely be practicable to move forward against the enemy who has just been attacking until he has begun to retreat. We shall pass from the defence, not to the attack, but to the pursuit.

IV. BATTLE OF TWO ARMIES ON THE MARCH

In our days, armies surround themselves with so widespread a mesh-work of scouts that they can hardly be taken by surprise on meeting the enemy's masses ; an engagement or battle between two armies meeting does not for us imply a surprise, it is simply the collision of two armies both of which have taken the offensive.

Thus defined, engagements brought on by meetings between forces of moderate size, up to and including an army corps, may be frequent. The deployment of such bodies is quick enough, and the ground almost always proves to be adaptable for the purpose.

The conditions are no longer the same when it is a question of entire armies. A twentieth-century general will find it as necessary as Napoleon did to concentrate his army for battle before allowing a portion of his forces to be thoroughly committed.

On the day when the two sides have come into touch, when the presence of the masses of the enemy has been indicated, either by the results of recon-naissance or by the engagement of a number of detachments, the general will avoid groping in the dark and hurrying into action as many of his troops as he can : he will settle his plan, of which the leading idea will have long been clear in his mind ; he will define the part to be played by each portion of the army, and will arrange the movements by which the army is to pass from the formation of march, which is deep and infinitely flexible, to the formation preparatory for battle, which is almost identical with a line.

A commander whose nature prompts him to resolute action will not wait for the enemy except to attack him, as Napoleon did at Austerlitz. In that way there will be a battle of two armies meeting one another, yet a battle in which one at least of the two adversaries will be acting according to a plan long thought out, with troops arranged beforehand with a view to carrying it out. Thus will be eliminated one of the features usually thought characteristic of a battle brought about by the meeting of two armies on the march. A great number of professional soldiers, perhaps the majority, think of this kind of battle as an engagement between two bodies of troops, both of which are taking the offensive, whose commanders cannot be said literally to be surprised, because each of them knew that the other was not far off, but all the same have kept on marching straight before them without modifying their arrangements and thus find themselves obliged to decide quickly and to improvise their plans for beginning and carrying out the attack.

This is really the type not only of a battle between two armies meeting, but of any and every battle as most people imagine it : two lines of columns coming into collision along their front with no preconceived idea, while the chiefs, of all grades, hurriedly take the measures "dictated by the situation." In this case, brought about by the lack of forethought, the intellectual sloth, and the ignorance of the two commanders, everything becomes difficult. The process of reconnaissance, the decisions, the manœuvres for which, when it is a question of attacking a position, there must be a liberal allowance of time, must all be

carried out in a few minutes when in presence of an enemy who is moving. The commander then, unless he has the grip and insight of a great general, has the choice between acting in a hurry, which is fatal, and taking his time in order not to be rash, and so losing all his opportunities and leaving the enemy free to act or even to extricate himself from an awkward situation. We have a right to hope that we shall not have to fight a battle in this style, which presupposes generals deficient in the science of war and in intellectual activity; but after all an engagement of this kind is so exactly like what too many people think a typical battle will be that we cannot afford to pass it by in silence.

In the battle of two armies on the march the qualities of the commander-in-chief undoubtedly have great weight, but all his plans may be upset by the incompetence of his subordinates. The quality of the whole army, of its officers of all ranks, acquires far greater importance than in the attack or defence of a position. Even if the commander-in-chief has been able to predetermine his dispositions as a whole, each of those who have to carry them out will find himself at every moment confronted by unexpected situations which he will have to take in at a glance and make up his mind quickly and skilfully how to meet. The gunner must quickly choose emplacements from which he can bring under fire the most important portions of the ground; the infantry officer must find out the points which are easy of attack and of which the occupation will most facilitate his further progress.

The supreme skill of a general consists in so dis-

posing his troops that he can make the most of favourable chances, above all in limiting the sphere of chance; in seeing the large outlines of a single manœuvre amid the apparent disorder of a number of local actions taking place along his front; in assigning to every one his task in such a way as to leave as little room as possible for surprises and for the necessity to improvise.

It is worth a great deal that an officer should be able to act for himself; it is indispensable: the training of peace time cannot possibly exaggerate its effort to develop this capacity. Yet the great general is he whose judgment is so true, whose insight so penetrating, and whose orders so lucid, that he rarely needs to put to the proof the power of his subordinates to act on their own account. Not that he gives them orders of elaborate detail to be carried out to the letter, but he enlightens them so fully concerning the general significance of the operation and the part which they have to play, he puts his finger so exactly on the several turns which events may take, pointing out what each of them will mean, that, whatever happens, they will know exactly the purpose to be borne in mind and will be able to concentrate their attention on the execution of the measures which they know to correspond with his wishes.

V. ATTACKS IN FLANK AND REAR

From the beginning of the world until our own time victory has almost always been won by attacking the enemy in flank, by a turning or overlapping movement. It is so natural that no one stops to analyse

the reasons for it, yet it is well worth while examining them.

When two armies are engaged, deployed face to face, they are materially and spiritually prepared to fight along their front, and have all their bearings adjusted to the direction perpendicular to that front. Any attack delivered upon the flanks or the rear of an army already spread out for battle catches it unprepared, obliges it to face in a direction in which nothing has been made ready, and, what is still more serious, seems to show that its commander has not foreseen everything and has let himself be gulled by the adversary. The whole army is troubled by this feeling, which undermines the self-confidence that forms the bond of its unity. There comes a wavering in the lines, the first flutter of the impulse towards a wild rush for safety. Here lies the spiritual element, so essential and so little understood, in which was rooted the method of Napoleon.

To come back to its material effects: an attack upon the enemy's flank, and still more upon both his flanks, puts upon him a grip which hampers his movements and his evolutions at the very moment when he ought to be making new dispositions. Cannae offers the finest instance of the advantage gained by that one of two adversaries who envelops the other even with inferior forces; an army that is surrounded and compressed cannot make use of all its resources.

Lastly, among the movements which are hampered by the assailant's progress on the flanks and in the rear, there is one of special importance--retreat. If at the moment when the defender is caught in flank he has no palpable means of regaining the upper

hand, he foresees that defeat is likely to become disaster. That was Napoleon's case at Waterloo as soon as the Prussians had taken Planchenoit.

What makes an attack in flank or rear cause such terrible harm is that, as a rule, before it can be delayed by a stubborn resistance it has reached some point where its results are disastrous. An attack on any point of the front cannot reach its goal, supposing it ever does reach it, until after a long struggle, of which the duration cannot be foreseen. But an attack on the enemy's flank can in a comparatively short time, which can be estimated beforehand, be carried to a point where it puts the defender at a palpable disadvantage.

The body employed in a turning movement has to march for a certain distance, which can be estimated beforehand, across unoccupied ground and then reaches a point approximately behind one wing of the enemy's lines, before it has been stopped by a serious resistance. The mere fact of its reaching that point does not produce victory; the defender may still get the upper hand, but he is now in a situation in which the handicap is against him. The assailant, in virtue of his enveloping position, has a decided moral ascendancy and can move his troops with much greater ease. The defender begins to find himself cramped; his troops are crowded together: for any counter-stroke he can collect the men only by drawing on his local reserves.

There is indeed in actions of minor importance one decisive resource favourable to the defence. It consists in keeping bodies of troops at a good distance behind the threatened wing ready to fall on the

outer flank of the assailant. This is easy when the radius of the turning movement does not exceed a mile or a mile and a half, but is almost impossible when it reaches a dozen miles or more. In a great battle of our time, when a turning movement must have a radius proportionate to the front, the marching wing may easily overlap the defender's first line by twelve or eighteen miles. A body of troops posted for the purpose of falling upon the outer flank of this marching wing would have to be twenty-five miles farther back than the first line—that is to say, two days' march away from the front. It is hard to imagine its being posted there in advance, before the commander-in-chief can know what form will be given to the enemy's attack.

It is essential clearly to distinguish both in mere engagements and in great battles between an overlapping and a turning movement. The difference between these two forms of attack, though it seems insignificant, is really of the utmost importance in considering the procedure by which they are carried out.

An overlapping movement is easy of execution. It naturally occurs to the mind of a general, who, having framed no plan in advance, can in this way, without running any risk, turn his numerical superiority to account. He does not extend his line any more than is absolutely necessary to overlap the enemy, and that only by degrees in proportion as the enemy extends his own front; he does not divide his army, and his order of battle offers no gap into which his adversary can throw himself.

A general requires more boldness and more fore-

thought to arrange a turning movement, which means to keep a body frankly separated from the main body in order to launch it upon the enemy's rear by a march independent of that of the principal force. In this case the connection between the two portions of the army can be looked for only in and through victory.

If the question is considered theoretically it seems impossible to send away a large body of troops towards one wing and to bring it upon the enemy's flank or rear without his being warned in time, but history proves that it is quite possible for the defender either to be unaware of the presence and of the approach of the turning body or to be in no condition to put any force in its way.

The most recent instances show that in the future as in the past turning movements will still very often be possible. But not all generals are capable of carrying them out. The failures of Hoche at Kaiserslautern in 1793 may serve as warnings against the repetition of his mistakes. If the success of these combined attacks requires favourable circumstances and a general of great ability, yet, when they do succeed, they have very decided advantages over mere overlapping attacks.

From the moment they are set in motion they more directly menace the enemy's communications, and the shock which they cause to the enemy's organisation and to the spirit of his troops is much more serious. Sufficient evidence of this will be found in a close examination of the results produced by Nogi's attacks on the Russian right at Mukden, as he gradually moved his forces farther to the north and as his

movement little by little developed from overlapping into turning.

The most essential element in the success of manœuvres of great radius is surprise. They must therefore be masked and must be accelerated as much as possible. Mounted troops, cyclists, and motors must do their full share : at the beginning they must screen the movement ; afterwards they must be the first to throw themselves on to the enemy's communications. So much in these days depends upon the railway communications, and the consumption of ammunition will inevitably be on so vast a scale, that these attacks in rear, these raids on the communications during the battle, will count for infinitely more than they ever did in the past.

VI. CHOICE OF THE MODE OF ATTACK

We have now reviewed the various forms which an attack may assume in a future battle.

When one of the adversaries maintains a passive attitude the attack delivered by his enemy will be more or less easy, more or less long, more or less costly, according to the procedure chosen, but the assailant will never run very serious risks. If both are determined to act, that is no longer the case ; the problem to be solved will be to distribute the forces and to place them so that success can be obtained at the decisive point before the time required for the enemy's manœuvre to be completed. You must calculate, for instance, whether your adversary's manœuvre will not last long enough to give you time to wear out and break through some portion of his front ;

but if you foresee that he will attempt an attack on your centre, you must consider whether there is not an overlapping manœuvre which may give you a decisive result before your front, suitably reinforced, has yielded to the enemy's efforts. Thus a general before settling the plan of his battle must calculate the time required for the march of his troops and the time during which they can hold out at given points, calculations for which military science supplies no exact numerical data. The general's estimate of the time during which his troops can hold a position will be dictated by his own judgment and by his tactical instinct, and he will reckon with the qualities of the troops of both sides as well as of the positions to be disputed.

When it is a case of one or two army corps, or even of an army of four corps, the length of the fronts in contact and the scope of the manœuvres that may be tried are not so great as to give time to pierce the assailant's front while he is carrying out a turning or overlapping movement. It will be necessary either to reply to his manœuvre or to forestall it by another. On the other hand, in the case of groups of armies, attacks in flank and in rear may well require time enough to admit of a central attack succeeding before they have been completed. If it seems likely that the enemy's attack and our own will both require about the same length of time for their execution, we ought to bear in mind the examples of Marathon, of Cannae, and of Auerstedt, and the advantages which, other things being equal, always belong to the commander who holds the circumference and therefore has space in his favour, and finds it easy

to make his movements converge, while his adversary, who is surrounded, moves with difficulty, has his communications restricted, and may break down under the converging fire of his adversary.

In the problems and calculations of which we have just been speaking the commander has at one and the same time to choose the form of his attack and to arrange the distribution of his forces—the density to be given to them in each portion of his line of battle. The battles of 1870 with their useless crowding of troops have completely falsified men's ideas on this subject. The more recent wars supply the elements for a juster appreciation.

The wars in South Africa, in Manchuria, and in the Balkans prove that an organised position can be held by a very sparse line. Hence the ideas of to-day concerning the extension of fronts. Whenever it is a question of a battle in which the solution can be swift, in other words can be obtained in less than a couple of days, this extension of the fronts will be justified. One army corps will be able to hold a front of six or eight miles, while another will be entrusted with the attack which is to bring victory. But as soon as we have to deal with great battles in which the decision is obtained by manœuvres requiring several days, the extension of fronts is an empty word; there must be local reserves sufficient to relieve the combatants when they are exhausted. We are thus brought back to the density of a generation ago of five or six men per yard.

It hardly seems likely, therefore, that in the great battles of the future the density will be less than it was in those of Napoleon.

Are there any other means than local resistance for causing the enemy to lose time on one portion of the front while we are preparing to put forth our greatest efforts elsewhere ?

The weapons in use after the war of 1870, guns of 80 or 90 millimetres and rifles of the models of 1874 and 1886, would perhaps have allowed the breaking off of an action, provided that it had been engaged with the preconceived idea of a retreat and planned and conducted accordingly. But, since the adoption of quick-firing guns, it has become almost impossible to break off an action and therefore also to carry on an action in retreat. A battery even when concealed cannot bring up its limbers without losing the teams ; only a few of the guns could be saved, those which were near to covered ground across which they could get away. As for the infantry, it would be hard for them to group themselves for a retreat.

It seems, then, as was suggested in the discussion of advance guards, that to break off an action, and to dispute the ground or make the enemy lose time by alternately fighting and retiring, are modes of action which, broadly speaking, have ceased to be practicable.

But this is true only with reference to the principal phase of an engagement. If we take account of the preliminary phase, which is nowadays so long, an enemy may be forced to lose a great deal of time without the engagement being carried to the point at which it cannot be broken off. When this is the purpose the engagement must be broken off while the enemy is still reconnoitring and before he has fully deployed even his advance guards.

For the same reason it is possible to spread out before the enemy a very thin curtain, against which he will rush, and which will cause him to deploy without gaining much benefit.

We have examined all the elements of modern battle; let us now try to put them together and to imagine what a great battle would be like, such a battle as may be expected in a European war.

VII. A BATTLE OF THE FUTURE

A battle in which armies of 100,000 or 200,000 men were opposed to one another, with all the room they required to deploy and to manœuvre, would show some palpable differences from the battles delivered in the nineteenth century.

As we have seen, the principal differences would consist in the duration and difficulty of the process of getting into touch with one another, in the uncertainty of the information acquired before the action was begun, and in the greater extension of the fronts. On these points the lessons given by the battles in Thrace and in Manchuria were as clear as could be. Victory will be gained by methods analogous to those of the past; generals will often be too timid or find themselves in conditions too unfavourable to attempt turning movements on a grand scale, like those employed by Napoleon at Castiglione, or at Jena, Eylau, Lützen, and Bautzen.

As all armies have to employ new means and new organs and to adapt them for their own use, a business which occupies the whole attention of their head-

quarters during peace, they have become a little more ponderous. They will therefore probably seek victory by overlapping attacks, which will usually develop of themselves without requiring great efforts of imagination from the commanders-in-chief. The struggle between the two adversaries will be one of economy and ruse. He who can be most sparing of troops on his front, who little by little can induce the enemy to engage the whole of his forces and can keep his own reserves longest, will carry off the victory. Where there is a lack of large ideas the talent of the commanders will show itself above all in the use made of reserves. The extent of the fronts will involve the maintenance of local reserves; the generals will be tempted to let them melt away, into the first line in struggles leading to nothing, or still worse to keep them back in second line and make no use of them at all.

A very clever general will be able to keep them at hand to make good any point of the front where there may be a local collapse at the opening of the battle, or, later, at the moment of the decision to throw them in at the critical point. If he calls to mind the instances furnished by the battles of Cannae and of the Sha-Ho, he will perhaps be less dismayed by such temporary success as the enemy may gain against his centre, provided he is sure of the crushing nature of the blow which must result from his own arrangements.

Whether he chooses a turning movement or an overlapping attack, his success in a battle will not be substantial unless all the troops engaged on his front grip the enemy from the start, never let go for

a moment, and push on in furious pursuit the instant the flank attack has produced its demoralising effect. The sooner his troops can push through the enemy's lines the better he will forestall his adversary's dispositions for an orderly retreat and the greater will be his chances of obtaining grand results, of routing the enemy. The army must therefore be perpetually ready for a fresh spurt and must never slacken its pressure on the enemy, so that it may take advantage of the first symptoms of his being shaken.

It looks as though the elements of modern fighting were favourable to the renaissance of another form of attack, which Frederick the Great preferred; it consists in throwing a veil before the enemy's lines and "bonneting" one of his wings with almost the whole of the available forces.

As we have seen, it is perhaps easier to-day to decoy the enemy with an insubstantial curtain than so to regulate a frontal action as to economise the forces for the decisive struggle without risking a dangerous check at the centre. The railways admit of detraining the first elements of an army towards the left and of carrying the main body towards the right, there to envelop and overwhelm a wing of the enemy.

To sum up: so long as it is a question of battles between armies of which the force is limited and which can move freely in the theatre of operations, the extension of the fronts and the detail of the fighting appear to be the only features peculiar to battles of the future. The general form remains pretty much what it was in the times of Moltke, of Napoleon, and of Frederick.

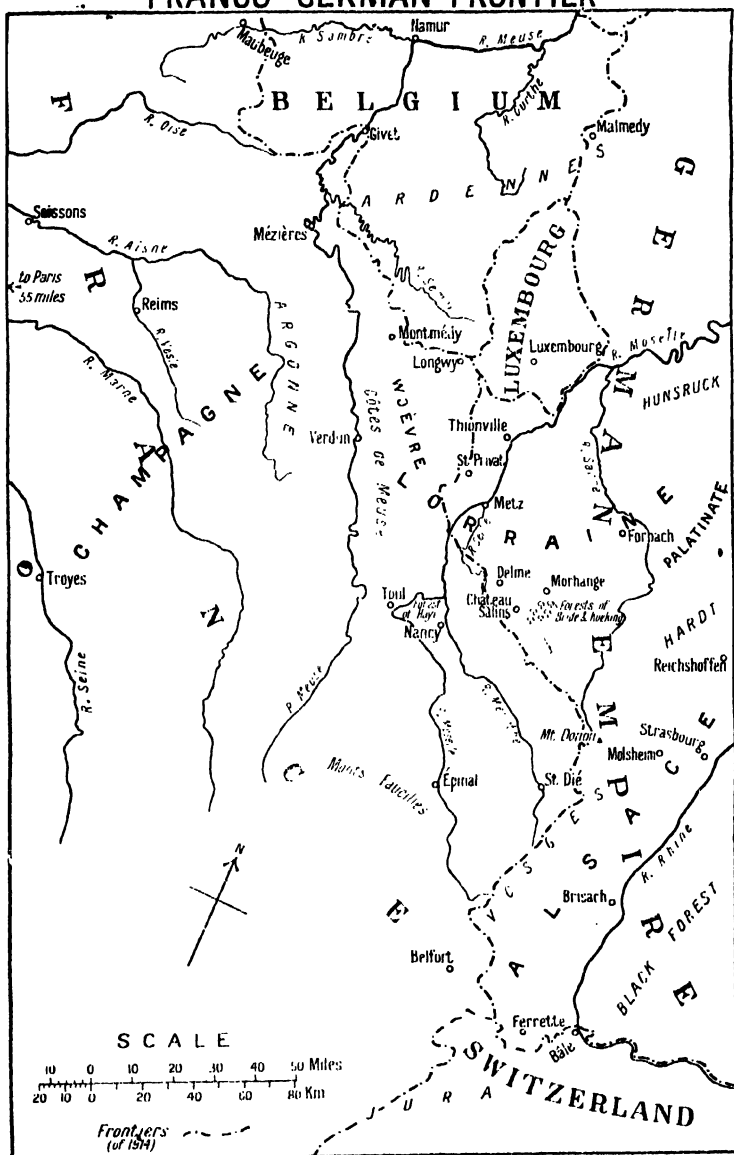
VIII. A FRANCO-GERMAN BATTLE

The battle of the future assumes features and a character of its own when we fix our attention on the region of the Rhine. There some three million men would be engaged, in a space scarcely wide enough to allow of their deployment, in a region of undulating country furrowed by great rivers and bristling with fortresses. Beyond all doubt the great principles which govern the art of war are always true, but in a particular case of this definite character some of them assume more importance while others become insignificant, and all of them acquire a very special character from the conditions in which they are applied.

If it be admitted that both belligerents are bound to respect the neutrality of Switzerland and of Belgium, the zone in which they will come into collision has a width of 150 miles between Longwy and Ferrette. To simplify our calculations, let us suppose that each side puts into line 1,250,000 men; the average density will be between four and five men per yard. In this zone on the German side are the fortified regions of Metz- Thionville and of Strasbourg - Molsheim, and higher up stream than Strasbourg the Rhine with the bridge-head of Brisach; in front of the Rhine the Vosges; between Molsheim and Metz the mass of Mount Donon, the forests and meres of the Upper Sarre, the forest of Bride and of Koeking, and the imposing Côte de Delme.

On the French side the fortress of Belfort, then the whole breadth of the Vosges, the line of the Moselle,

FRANCO-GERMAN FRONTIER



the entrenched camp of Épinal, the great fortress of Toul with the forest of Haye ; farther north, the line of the Meuse with the almost inaccessible cliffs of the Côtes-de-Meuse in front of it ; and lastly Verdun and the Lower Meuse on its way to the Ardennes.

In second line, in the German zone, the Black Forest, the wooded mountains of the Palatinate and of Rhenish Prussia—the Hardt and the Hunsrück ; in the French zone the Monts Faucilles to the south of Toul ; farther north the Argonne.

In a country thus crowded with obstacles the average density of between four and five men a yard, which we have already calculated, corresponds to a density of at least nine men a yard in those parts where it is possible for troops to deploy and to fight. Such a density has seldom been reached in modern times and has never yielded any advantage.

We see, then, that the armies of which France and Germany dispose would reach from Switzerland to Belgium with a density too great except for the most hotly contested points of a bloody battle. In the whole region of Alsace and Lorraine the troops would be crowded together as they were in 1870 in front of Saint-Privat.

Before the battle the groups would be placed one behind another like the steps of a ladder so as to cover a greater or less depth in the zone of operations. We must not imagine these crowded masses arranged at the outset in a linear form.

As a fact many of our contemporaries do so picture the war and the battle of the future. We bear heavily the burden of the new elements ; the railways, mobilisation, the services in rear of the army are the

subject of such minute studies that there is a temptation to be absorbed by them. There are so many difficulties in the transport and the march of the armed masses, and in the supply of all kinds of necessities, that it is hard to look beyond these matters. It is thought so difficult to make the whole organism work smoothly in the simplest case, that of a march straight forward in fighting formation, that it is not believed possible to carry out manœuvres and operations involving combinations such as those of the last century. Many soldiers seem to despair of rendering the new organs flexible enough to adapt themselves to any and every scheme of strategy. It is necessary to dispel these apprehensions and to prepare the minds of all concerned for the execution of any plans that our leaders may devise.

Before Napoleon, the movements of the armies were quite distinct from the battles. Since the Napoleonic wars, the large operations have been prolonged into the battle which was their natural goal and consummation; in a future Franco-German war the battle would almost be fused with the operations, and it seems at first sight hardly possible to consider them separately. But this appearance of simplicity is superficial and dangerous; it would mislead us into supposing that war would in future consist merely in moving the troops by the greatest possible number of parallel railway lines and of sending them forward into the battle as soon as they were detrained.

But we must not so lightly set aside the operations which precede a battle and the principles which ought to preside over them. The fact that the troops are transported by railway is no reason why their assembly

and their concentration should escape from all the laws, which, as the experience of past wars has shown, cannot be infringed with impunity.

We must therefore expect to see the armies of the future at the moment of their detrainment not deployed in a line of army corps from Bâle to Longwy or to the Belgian Meuse, but distributed in groups of unequal strength and extent in order to manœuvre before the fight.

In former wars a detached corps could not be recalled in time to co-operate in the battle unless it was at the start less than a march away from the decisive point; in future this will no longer be the case. All the elements of war have increased in magnitude, and by a kind of natural law have remained in much the same relation to one another. While the front of armies in battle has increased, everything else has increased: the distance up to which an army must protect itself before being finally committed to battle, the depth required by the several groups to guard against all eventualities, and also the resisting power of defensive positions and the duration of battles. Accordingly a general who is preparing his principal action in Lorraine may at first keep some of his forces in the neighbourhood of the Ardennes or of the Jura and yet be able to recall them in time for the decisive battle, because the distance from Luxembourg to Château-Salins or from Givet to Nancy can be covered in the time which a struggle for the strong positions of French or German Lorraine will last. The great lateral movements will of course for the most part be made by railway; they will not take less than four or five days; but the battles

between the Sarre and the Moselle will last much longer.

The immensity of the masses engaged will cause the battle to extend across the whole width of the theatre of operations; the natural duration of modern battles, further increased by the power of resistance of the fortresses and their connecting lines, will cause the struggle between the two armies to last a considerable time. There may be a single battle begun on the same day at all points of a line from Bâle to the forest of Ardennes, but it will much more probably be a series of combats following one another in time and space and linked up by manœuvres of parts of the armies.

While a general will obstinately pursue victory in the region where he has made up his mind to obtain it, he will not be able to avoid conflict in other parts of the theatre of operations. He will perhaps be able, if he has a great numerical superiority, to take the offensive at all points. He may be able to attack at the same time on the Seille and on the Ourthe, on the Upper Vosges and on the Semoy; but he will be playing for very high stakes. As we have already noted, the theatre of operations is covered with fortresses and natural obstacles against which the offensive must break itself or wear itself out. It cannot reach its goal by means of a central attack except after several days of desperate efforts during which fresh troops must be always at hand to carry on the struggle; a large turning movement cannot be carried out without prolonged marches: from Mauberge to Malmédy, as the crow flies, is ninety-five miles, say a dozen marches.

272 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

Thus in whatever manner the decisive solution is sought, it is impossible to count on obtaining it in a single day, and there must be the certainty that the forces employed apart from the principal attack will not be used up before it has succeeded. It will be very difficult to avoid their being used up if the offensive is taken at all points.

We are thus led to think that the battle of the future in the region of Lorraine or of the Ardennes will be made up of several battles separated by the great fortresses or the natural obstacles. At one point one of the armies will pile up attacks on attacks, multiplying its guns of all calibres, lavishing its projectiles, ruining the physical and moral forces of the enemy. At another point batteries firing at long range will keep the enemy at a distance and troops of slight density will resist his attacks. Possibly in the region of the Ardennes armies will be closely engaged, each trying to pierce or to overlap the other. Altogether there will be three or four distinct battles at the same time, and that one of the two sides which wins one of these battles soon enough to go on and take part in the others before they are decided will come out victorious in the great struggle between the two nations.

Perhaps, if its commander is remarkably skilful, he will have managed to avoid partial defeats, either because he will have delayed some of the enemy's armies in districts where movement is difficult by weak detachments lightly equipped and apt for quick retreats ; or because he will have organised positions solidly fortified against which the enemy's forces will dash themselves for weeks. He will at the same

time have brought together against one of the enemy's armies, either to overlap it or to wear it out and break through it, forces incomparably superior to those with which they can be confronted.

If both sides assemble and concentrate their armies in such a way that the meeting takes place on the frontier the great fortresses will be included in the field of battle. It would be a mistake to begin the attack upon a fortress before having surrounded it and even before having gained in the open field a victory securing the possibility of undertaking sieges. A general must ignore all the principles of war if he attacked Metz at the same time as Château-Salins, or Toul at the same time as the line of the Meurthe. But that part of the fortresses which can be approached must be closely blockaded and the lines in front of them fortified as a protection against the sallies of the armies which the enemy can at any time send out from them.

If either side gain such a start as to penetrate into the enemy's territory beyond the fortresses in first line before meeting his adversary, the battles may assume a character more complex, more decisive. The defender may have arranged counter-strokes and flank attacks which will catch the armies in the act of coming out from the passages between the fortified zones. Against French armies making their way into Lorraine, attacks could spring simultaneously from Rhenish Prussia, from the Palatinate, and from the Upper Vosges; against German armies coming out from between Épinal and Toul the counter-stroke may come from the Monts Faucilles or from Champagne. An army that had crossed the Belgian

Ardennes would risk still greater dangers when it was nearing its goal.

The inference from all this is that an army directed without art and without prudence, concentrated at the very first near to the frontier, would run a three-fold risk : that of coming into line without having received its full complement of reserves ; that of not being strong enough to carry off the victory at the point where it is sought and being uselessly numerous at the points where the enemy ought to be delayed with little outlay of force ; and lastly, that of beginning by a half success, perhaps encouraged by the enemy and soon turned into a complete disaster. These disagreeable possibilities cannot be got rid of unless the enemy makes the same mistake, and unless, when the two armies meet, they are both in the same homogeneous linear formation devoid of any idea and of any possibility of manœuvring. In this particular case one of the two adversaries will gain the advantage in one part or another of the theatre of operations. The progress of the different armies will bring one or another of them past the neighbouring fortresses. There will be vast rents in their order ; the struggle and the masses will be subdivided ; the single battle will be decomposed, as in the cases already described, into partial battles, but the generals, as they will not have distributed their troops in depth, will not be able to make use of their reserves.

The danger to which an army is exposed when its detrainment and concentration are carried out too near to the frontier is further increased if an unskilful use is made of what are called the " covering troops."

These bodies, of which the organisation dates from the introduction of rapid mobilisation and of concentration by railway, have no other purpose than to protect the mobilisation in the frontier region against raids and to form a curtain in front of the zone of concentration. They can never be strong enough to offer serious resistance to armies as distinct from small parties of the enemy. They must not be asked to dispute the ground with the mass of the enemy's forces nor even with his advance guards, nor to secure time for the mass of our armies to unite, if these have been detained too near to the frontiers to be out of reach of the enemy.

To count on the covering troops to grapple with the enemy's armies even if they give ground in doing so, is to condemn them to get beaten in isolation without even having the certainty that they will secure the asked-for result; it is to prepare to sustain the decisive struggle with four army corps the less, and those the best army corps, and with confidence shaken by a first defeat.

We must therefore conclude— and it is essential to make this understood by the whole public, by all citizens — that they must not imagine a Franco-German conflict as a battle engaged from the first hours of mobilisation between the “covering troops” of the two countries, carried on a few days afterwards by the active army corps detained on a line from Bâle to Longwy and leaving behind so-called “second-line” troops to fulfil missions not precisely defined. This false conception, unfortunately too widespread, would cause the cry of treason to be raised at the sight of the first dispositions taken by a good general.

Every one must expect to see the armies united into large and deep groups far from the frontier, kept out of reach of the enemy simply by distance, and finding in this distance one of the elements indispensable for manœuvring. Men must everywhere be persuaded that to act thus is to act with prudence and at the same time to act on the offensive, and that this is the only means of avoiding reverses at the start and those premature collisions which tie the hands of the commander-in-chief and hamper his initiative.

Let no one therefore expect to see the armies pushed on at once to Saint-Dié, to Nancy, and to Montmédy, there to fight, as advance-guard armies, battles like those of Forbach and of Reichshoffen. Let no one expect to see "covering troops" struggling desperately to dispute with the enemy every inch of the frontier region. We must be convinced that a true general will know how to sacrifice local defences in order to concentrate all his efforts upon the decisive action; that he will unite his forces far from the enemy and then advance to the attack with a well-settled plan. The decisive struggle will then be split up into partial battles, foreseen and willed by the chief, unfolding themselves according to his plans, as his armies take the offensive at one point, resist at another and slip aside at a third, or threaten one district in order then to be carried back by railway to the decisive point in another.

IX. THE CAUSES OF VICTORY

Such are, to our thinking, the features and character of future battles. As for the causes of victory, they will be the same as in the past. They are, in ascend-

ing order of importance, the *matériel*, the troops, the commander-in-chief.

In all ages superiority in armament and equipment has largely contributed to victory. Its importance is increasing in proportion as the rapid progress of artillery makes appreciable the differences between the artilleries of the European Powers.

A rifle or a field gun superior to those of the adversary gives great chances of success; above all, in a conflict in which the inevitable use of defensive positions will allow of economising the forces destined for the theatres of secondary operations, the organisation of the artillery of position ought to produce real advantages.

The organisation of aerial fleets and of batteries capable of fighting them also assumes capital importance.

The preparation of railways, both their *matériel* and their *personnel*, for complicated operations of transport has to be brought to perfection in accordance with a new order of ideas.

As regards the troops it is evident that, other things being equal, superiority of numbers will give the victory. Moreover history teaches us that superiority of numbers, when it is great enough, prevails over the quality of the adverse troops and the merits of their commander. The improvised troops of the national defence in 1870 beat the veterans of Von der Tann at Coulmiers, thanks to a superiority of three to one. The volunteers of 1792 began to get the upper hand of the Austrians and Prussians at the end of 1793 and in 1794 by

278 THE GREAT BATTLES OF HISTORY

means of a very great numerical superiority, and by reason of the great superiority of the allies even Napoleon could not win at Leipzig.

It will be the same in future. No doubt the improvement of weapons allows the combat to be prolonged and favourable positions to be defended with smaller forces than in the past, yet numbers none the less retain their rights to ultimate success. Now as always the talent of a general consists in obtaining the superiority of numbers at the decisive point, but there will ever be a disproportion of forces beyond which it will be impossible, as it was at Leipzig, to have the superiority at the decisive point against an adversary whose total force is superior.

Military instruction, when it is not inspired by a sufficient knowledge of the principles which guided the great captains, fails to give its due place to the consideration of numbers. But the great captains are far from disdaining numerical superiority; and even when they can do without it in practice, it stands in the front rank of their preoccupations. Everything else, indeed, is impalpable and ever-changing; if it is true that victory is often due to some spiritual or intellectual element, it is certain also that to base a plan upon moral or intellectual forces is to build upon the sand; they are unstable, they produce unforeseen successes, but they cannot be counted upon. Napoleon, with his profound knowledge of the human heart, directed his attacks in such a manner as to produce the greatest possible moral effect, but he always planned his operations with a view to ensure the superiority of numbers at the decisive point.

Möltke never undertook anything without having superior numbers, and in several of the memoirs that he drew up for his sovereign he dismissed the hypothesis of a war declared without this superiority.

The great battles which we have studied may cause us to lose sight of the importance of numbers. Their celebrity is due as often as not to the achievements they represent, to victory won in spite of inferior numbers by the bravery of the troops and the talent of the general. This was the case at Marathon, at Arbela, at Pharsalia, at Rocroi, at Auerstedt. Hence we might be induced to despise numbers and, because so many illustrious generals with first-rate troops have crushed a superior enemy, to neglect the organic laws which tend to provide numerous troops. There has been no lack of this inclination since Von der Goltz gave currency to his well-known formula of the "new Alexander" who "at the head of a small force well armed and well trained" will crush the impotent masses. Without having first got hold of the new Alexander or of the small well-trained force, men have pooh-pooed the armed masses, which, all said and done, are still the surest resource on which to rely. What is certain is that a slackening of the military effort made by a nation goes hand in hand with a slackening of military instruction, superior as well as primary.

But to come back to the spiritual qualities which carried off the victory in most of the battles which we have described. On this point we think it necessary to speak with precision, not to be content with repeating phrases, invoking moral forces and declaring that they alone are of any importance. On this subject

we mean to reach practical conclusions and to come down from the region of ideals to that of reality.

What exactly is the moral force that is so decisive in battle? It is the more important to give an exact answer to this question because on this subject our country suffers from a fatal prejudice. This moral force, which we find at Marathon, at Cannae, even at Valmy—is it enthusiasm, is it the glow of patriotism, of religion, or of politics? No; at least, not so far as can be seen. What we always find on the side of the victor is discipline, military education and instruction. There is no fighting spirit distinct from the military spirit. An army not disciplined and trained is no army, and history shows that those peoples that have been animated by a sterling patriotism have translated it not by a kind of special excitement in battle, but by the renunciation of paltry selfish vanities and by the acceptance of the soldier's labours and the soldier's discipline.

At Marathon the Persians were conquered by the Greeks, who were better trained and apter in evolutions; they were still more inferior in this respect to the Macedonians of Alexander who gained the day at Arbela.

The veterans of Hannibal at Cannae had the better of the young legionaries; they were conquered at Zama by the marvellous discipline of the legionaries of Scipio.

At Pharsalia the steadiness of Caesar's veterans gave him the advantage over Pompey's cohorts, ill trained in their Oriental campaigns.

We have seen how at Bouvines the military qualities of the combatants determined their comparative

values in the battle : town militia beaten by mercenaries from Brabant, and these in their turn by men-at-arms trained to war from childhood.

In the battles of our day is not the situation quite different ? Does the skirmisher, who must rely above all on his primitive instincts, need as much training and discipline as were required for the evolutions in close order of the battalions of a hundred years ago ? Yes, assuredly, he needs them infinitely more. To instruct a man in the regular movements of a body in close order is nothing in comparison to putting into him the habits and ideas which make him capable of acting on his own account as a skirmisher in battle. The traditional story of the volunteers of 1792 unfortunately suggests among other things that those volunteers fought in dispersed order because they were incapable of manœuvring in line. The truth is that forty-eight hours were needed to teach them to manœuvre in close order and that more than a year was required to make skirmishers of them. The difference is still more marked to-day, because the skirmisher is more left to himself in a modern battle and because the spiritual bond between a soldier and his neighbours and leaders must be stronger in proportion to the space which parts them in action.

The thinner the fighting formations, the greater the need for their adapting themselves to the ground and making an intelligent use of it ; the more the skirmisher escapes from the immediate control of his leaders the greater will be his need for confidence in himself and in the others, for cohesion and discipline. His confidence in himself comes from his military instruction ; his confidence in his comrades and in his leaders, and,

with it, cohesion and discipline, come from their life in common, from their comradeship, and from the habits developed in their military exercises. The military spirit must be developed in order to obtain the fighting spirit.

A heart fired by great ideals may enable a man to master fatigue and hardship, to hold out on long marches in spite of heat and cold, and to endure hunger and thirst ; it may not always suffice to dominate the fear of death. A man's highest ideals may fail him under fire ; in that moment he needs all the ties and all the associations formed by a soldier's life. These are what give armies their cohesion. If men are to overcome the strongest impulse of nature, that of self-preservation, their association with one another must have developed in them a second nature. This is the true purpose of military education, which would be a hundred times more important than military instruction, were it not for the large part played by the instruction in the education.

This is where patriotism turns the scale ; nothing but patriotism can give men the will to submit to the training which produces this education. What must have been the passionate patriotism of Rome's young men to turn them into the instrument, so terribly docile, with which Scipio conquered at Zama !

The last element of victory, perhaps the most potent, is the genius of the commander-in-chief. There is no means of bringing about the rise of a genius when the occasion calls, but, if he is there, he should have the opportunity of making his way. Moreover there ought to be the means of developing in all officers the qualities required for command ; there must be a

school of generalship. The most sacred duty of commanders of every rank, and especially of those in supreme command, is to regulate accordingly the promotion and instruction of officers. Every act of favouritism, however trivial and insignificant it may seem, is treason.

It is impossible to avoid errors of this kind, as it is impossible to induce all citizens to sacrifice their personal vanities and to serve as soldiers, except when patriotism dominates all other passions. This is the reason—and we cannot repeat it too often—why patriotism is the moving spirit of great achievements and the first cause of victory.

Last but not least, patriotism must be beyond the reach of despair. The lesson of all the examples that we have passed in review is that a single battle, however decisive, has never brought about the downfall of a nation determined to conquer. Yet the nation must have, must have given itself, commanders able to conquer. Let us then, during peace, form a galaxy of masters of war, let us put the best of them in the highest commands, and then, in victory or defeat, let us set our faces towards victory still.

NOTE ON THE FRENCH GUARD AT WATERLOO

IN the chapter on Waterloo I have ventured to modify two sentences in which Colonel Colin describes the use made by Napoleon of the French Guard, both against the Prussians and against the English, as I suspect that there is either a slip of the pen or a misprint in the French text. The infantry of the Guard consisted of four regiments of Grenadiers and four of Chasseurs, all of them of two battalions and all of them officially described as "Old Guard." There were also two regiments of Tirailleurs and two of Voltigeurs, also all of them of two battalions. These were the "Young Guard." We have to account, therefore, for twenty-four battalions, and the complete account is as follows :

Eight battalions of the Young Guard were sent to Plancenoit to assist Lobau. This disposes of the Young Guard.

Two battalions of the Old Guard (Grenadiers II. 1 and Chasseurs II. 1) charged and retook Plancenoit (Houssaye, page 383).

This left Napoleon with fourteen battalions of the Old Guard. Of these, one (Chasseurs I. 1) was at Cailloux as the Emperor's personal guard. Two (Grenadiers I.) were in reserve on the road behind La Belle Alliance.

Of the eleven remaining battalions of the Old Guard, two (Grenadiers IV. 2 and Chasseurs IV. 2) were united into one battalion for the attack on the English, and apparently Grenadiers III. 2, with which Napoleon himself was present, was similarly amalgamated with Chasseurs I. 2. Thus eleven battalions formed nine for the purpose of the great attack on the English. These nine battalions were as follows :

Grenadiers II. 2, III. 1, III. 2 amalgamated with Chasseurs I. 2, IV. 1, IV. 2 amalgamated with Chasseurs IV. 2.

Chasseurs II. 2, III. 1 and 2, IV. 1. •

On all the points of this account James and Houssaye are agreed.

S. W.

909/COL



14294

